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GOD OUR HELP



# GOD OUR HELP

*By*

F. HENRY EDWARDS



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*To*

LYMAN, RUTH, AND PAUL  
AND TO THEIR GENERATION WITH  
MY AFFECTION, HOPES, AND PRAYERS

*Our God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast,  
And our eternal home!*

*Before the hills in order stood,  
Or earth received her frame,  
From everlasting thou art God,  
To endless years the same.*

—Isaac Watts, 1719

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## INTRODUCTION

This book is the result of my deep feeling that a major need for these difficult days is renewed and deeper faith in God. There is nothing final or very original about it. It is merely a testimony which demanded expression. It is sent out with an earnest desire that it will prove helpful to those who read it.

It is impossible to acknowledge my indebtedness to all whose written or spoken words have stimulated me. I have perhaps been most greatly assisted by Alfred Noyes' *Watchers of the Sky* and *The Unknown God* and by John Hadham's *Good God* and *God in a World at War*. Lewis Mumford's *Faith for Living* and John Knox's *Religion and the Present Crisis* have also been very helpful. The literature in this field is voluminous, however, and I have read here and there for many years. The best way I can imagine to express my debt of gratitude to those who have helped me is to pass on my own testimony.

F. HENRY EDWARDS.

Independence, Mo.  
August 4, 1943.



# HAVE FAITH IN GOD

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## THE NEW CRUSADE

THE TIME IS RIPE FOR A new crusade of faith. During the past hundred years, the external conditions of life have been transformed; the barriers of time and distance which once separated men from each other separate us no longer. Every man's environment has been changed, not only by reason of changed customs and changed tools for living but also because men have been brought so close to each other in so many ways. Today the Chinese in the next street and the Chinese at home in China are both important to the average American, and this is true in a practical sense as well as ideally. As General Smuts of South Africa said twenty years ago: "Mankind is once more on the move. The very foundations have been shaken and loosened, and things are again fluid. The tents have been struck, and the great caravan of humanity is once more on the march."

This is true despite the critical nature of the times in which we live; or perhaps even because of them. The word "crisis" belongs rightly to our medical friends. It is used by them to denote the turning point in a period of sickness. At the crisis of illness, it becomes clear whether or not the body has the strength necessary to throw off the disease which has infected it. So, now, we have come to a point in our common life where we must show whether we have the strength necessary to throw off the maladies which have become apparent during these years of readjustment, and to go on to the new age which God envisioned when he trusted us with the gifts in which we moderns take such pride.

The idea of crisis should not frighten us; but it should steel our resolution to meet well the time of testing. The fact that there is a crisis shows that there is still hope for civilization, and the urgency

of our need is the best possible antidote to shallow thinking and cheap living. The only ages of the past, during which there was no sense of crisis, were ages when men were not alert enough to sense and to respond to the call of the Spirit of God. The New Testament is full of the sense of crisis. The Reformation came forth at a time of crisis. So did the Restoration Movement. The European crisis associated with the French Revolution was only diverted from England because of the work of men like John and Charles Wesley. Everything that thoughtful men are now saying about our spiritual bankruptcy in national and international life was said by Carlyle ninety years ago; for example:

"In the days that are passing over us, even fools are arrested to ask the meaning of them; few of the generations of men have seen more impressive days. Days of endless calamity, disruption, dislocation, confusion worse confounded—it is not a small hope that will suffice us, the ruin being clearly universal. There must be a new world if there is to be a world at all. That human beings in Europe can ever return to the old sorry routine, and proceed with any steadiness or continuance therein, this small hope is not now a tenable one. These days of universal death must be days of universal rebirth, if the ruin is not to be total and final. It is a time to make the dullest man consider whence he came and whither he is bound."

But the fact that crises recur, now in one form and now in another, should not blind us to their reality. They will occur again and again so long as there is tension between the things that are and the things that ought to be. A young couple marry and set up housekeeping in a small bungalow and have plenty of room for themselves, the wedding presents, and an occasional guest. Then the babies come along, and space which was once ample is now at a premium. Something has to be done, for the situation is critical, so they move to larger quarters. The same thing happens in the moral history of a people. The Mosaic Law, for example, was admirably adapted to the moral and spiritual needs of the early Israelites. But the people outgrew it, and Jesus had no alternative but to say,

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you."

In our own day we have been precipitated into the midst of crises because our concept of God has not kept ahead of the universe and its component parts, the astounding advances made by our scientists and inventors have dazzled us so completely that even some of the best-informed have lost their way. We have learned more about the world in which we live than anyone has ever known before. We have peered farther into the remote corners of the universe, and deeper into the structure of the atom. We have developed new varieties of flowers and fruits, bred new strains of domesticated animals, found new metals, and invented new alloys. Those who live in the favored centers of civilization eat of the good of all lands, go abroad clothed in fine raiment, call to their service a thousand mechanical slaves, talk with their friends across continents and oceans, enter vicariously into the lives and loves of the great and near-great of history and of fiction, travel with the speed of the sun by air and on land or cross the seven seas in luxury liners equipped beyond the dreams of yesterday's kings.

Possession of new tools blinded modern men to the limitations of these tools. We thought of them as the signs and symbols of a new and better world into which we were entering by virtue of our knowledge and skill. We acted as though we had just come into our inheritance, and, like Jack Horner, we said how good we were because the plums of life were coming our way. We talked as though science holds the key to the deepest secrets of personal and communal life, and began to exchange our trust in God for consultation with the psychiatrist and the doctor and the banker and the research worker. Lowering the horizons of our expectations, many of us lived as though economic goods were primary. We acted as though the most important values available to mankind were centered in land and buildings and natural resources and scientific inventions, and in the ability to manipulate these so as to increase personal and national prestige. For many, profit replaced worth as the goal of endeavor. Education became more and more "practical," and colleges and uni-

versities sought to win students by pointing out to them the salaries commanded by successful college graduates.

Then came the depression, and then war. Even in the midst of prosperity, thoughtful men had not been very happy. Now the mood of self-sufficient optimism gave way before a wave of frustration. Men became aware of an underlying insecurity. The rich man realized that changing circumstances might easily impoverish him, or that sons brought up in idleness might squander his wealth. The rich nation found itself the envy and the prey of the leaner peoples, or the victim of its own softness. And, more startling still, the barbarism which advancing knowledge was supposed to have eliminated broke out in new eruptions which for a time threatened all the finest values of life as it spread death and destruction on every side. Meanwhile "backward" peoples who had never heard that there was such a thing as salvation by science, taught us anew the importance of such a thing as salvation by loyalty, for it was the strength of this spiritual bond which united the Russians and Philippines in defense of their home lands, and lack of it which brought defeat to the Allied Nations in Burma and the Dutch East Indies.

Having in mind the critical nature of the situation, as it is today, we ask what peculiar lacks have brought us to our present predicament. Surely we are not in this quandary because of what we have. The tools of our generation have not betrayed us. The scientific insights of recent decades have not robbed us. To be able to command the services of our mechanical aides, and to put to constructive use a thousand-and-one hitherto waste products does not condemn us. What does betray and rob and condemn us is the lack of any central controls, or of any guiding principles, or of any final authority. We have lost our perspective and no longer have a clear idea of what is finally worth-while. We need to recover our sense of values. No, we must go further than that. "Lif is more than meat, and the body than raiment." We cannot live truly by bread alone. We must reach forward to grasp a new and finer set of values which includes all that is best in what has gone before, and adds thereto insight and understanding,

which are available now just because the tools of human intercourse are so much more sharply tempered than ever before.

In England a few years ago almost every horse on the streets wore a set of "blinkers," which were devices to keep him from looking around and were therefore useful in keeping him on the highway. There are those who would have us keep our minds and hearts in blinkers, so that we will be content to keep plodding ahead on the old road, doing the same old things, though perhaps with a little more energy than before; but there is no ultimate salvation in the more energetic repetition of yesterday's procedures. We have to reach forward and upward, walking by the light which shall come from on high, and trusting in divine help and guidance for the needs of everyday. We shall have to assert the values of personality above those of economics or of science. And if history is to be relied on, we will not do this until we are able to discover someone greater than ourselves to whom we can give our utmost loyalty. No civilization has yet survived the breakdown of faith. Nor will ours.

The situation, though critical, is not without hope. Indeed, it is full of hope. We have come to the crossroads; but something within assures us that we shall not fail. Men were not born to come this far and then to be lost. This is not mere wishful thinking. The most creative spiritual revivals in history have taken place when civilization hung in the balance, but when men of faith were warned in time. In faith are those mainsprings of character which control the will and make temperament the servant and not the master of the self. The question is: Shall we live by faith or by sight; by tangible realities only, or by such guiding realities as faith and trust and loyalty and justice? "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

The supreme moral adventure, beside which all other adventures pale into insignificance, is the quest for human worth. When we are at our best, we keep this well to the forefront of our activities and of our thinking, no matter what the immediate task may be. Men and nations forget this at their peril.

# HAVE FAITH IN GOD

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## THE NATURE OF FAITH

IN THE LETTER to the Hebrews we are told that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."<sup>1</sup> Weymouth translates this as a "well-grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see." The Greek word which is here rendered as "assurance" and as "well-grounded assurance" may also be rendered as "title-deed," so that the basic idea seems to be that the man who has faith in God has a rightful claim on the best things that can be hoped for.

We shall do well to get the writer's point clearly in mind before we go farther. He says that faith is assurance and evidence. It is not the kind of evidence which a scientist values, but it is the kind of evidence which convinces a boy that his mother loves him. It is not unlike what the lawyers call "circumstantial evidence"; which the lawyers also say is the best kind of evidence there is. Certainly faith in God is not just a happy conjecture, or a leap in the dark, or a prime sample of "wishful thinking." It is rooted in the solid realities which lie behind the appearance of things. It is the affirmative attitude taken by persons of insight in response to life as a whole. It is not just an opinion, nor is it just a sedative. It is a sane and sober judgment, warmed and illuminated by emotion, a creative force in the business of living. Faith sustains and empowers men who see beyond appearances to ultimate reality, who see beyond things to God.

Faith has both its passive and its active moods, and they are intimately related to each other.

Faith in its passive mood begets confidence and a sense of security out of which to fight manfully in the battle of life. Without these



recurrent periods of quietness and contemplation, our hearts fail us. It was not without reason that the Master spent forty days in the wilderness prior to the opening of his public ministry, and that Paul went straight to Arabia after his experience at Damascus. Perhaps one of our greatest needs in the midst of the hurry and bustle of this modern world is to find occasions when we can "be still and know." It was this strength won in quietness which was in the mind of Arthur Hugh Clough when he wrote:

"It fortifies my soul to know  
That though I perish, truth is so;  
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,  
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.  
I steadier step when I recall  
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall."

Faith in its active mood is well illustrated in the lives of the Old Testament heroes. It was Noah's faith that caused him to make provision for a future which was belied by present appearances, but which had been guaranteed to him by the word of God.<sup>2</sup> It was because of his faith that Abraham took such a firm hold on the promises of God that he lived for years in the present enjoyment of victories which lay centuries in the future, holding the coming grandeur of Zion within his grasp while he was yet a wanderer in an alien land.<sup>3</sup> It was in the strength of faith that Moses turned his back on the seeming opportunities of Egypt and waited for forty years in Midian, so that he might spend his mature and tested powers for a despised people who nevertheless shared God's promise with him.<sup>4</sup>

The heroes of the New Testament had an even better reason for faith in God than did the heroes of the Old Testament. God who at sundry times and in diverse manners had spoken in times past to their fathers by the prophets had spoken in their own time to them by his Son.<sup>5</sup> Abraham's trusting self-surrender to the will and purpose of God meant to them all that it had meant to Abraham, plus

what it had come to mean through Christ. To Paul for example, the word "faith" expressed the warm and confident trust in God which was the mainspring of action among the saints. He felt that this faith was so important in the sight of God that it wiped out the memory of all past transgressions on the part of those who truly shared it.<sup>6</sup> To Paul, faith was the attitude of the son whose highest hope and aspiration is to live as becomes the child of a wise and good and gracious parent.

Jesus made great demands of his disciples, but he gave them in return a great assurance. Those who were worthy of him responded to the demands and shared the assurance. They experienced the peace which comes when the whole of life is unified in the service of a great cause, they knew the freedom from anxiety and worry which comes from setting one's heart on the things of God and so seeing things in their true and rightful proportion. Strengthened by the sense of his abiding presence, they made the achievement of a better world by the power of his grace the great purpose of their lives. They preached the gospel with boldness and confidence, and faced what pain and persecution this brought in its train, rejoicing in the very suffering which deterred other men from service.

The vision of such men of God gave birth to an invincible optimism. They laid hold of a better future as though it were already theirs, living to make it possible and dying in confident enjoyment of that which was yet to be. It is small wonder that with such examples in our sacred literature, faith has been variously defined as: "The courage of the spirit which projects itself forward, sure of finding the truth," "belief in the spirit as against the appearance of things, and in the future as against the things that are"; and "belief in God as against the world and its forces, particularly the forces of injustice and of death"; and again as, "that active conviction which molds human conduct with constant regard to the best that is yet to be and whose coming is guaranteed by God himself"; and still again as "holding reasonable convictions in realms beyond final demonstration, and thrusting out one's life upon these convictions as

though they were surely true." To sincere and earnest and godly men, their faith in God has always been the final justification of the best as against the second best. In its finest sense such faith is not an intellectual attainment, but a spiritual achievement. It is not the result merely of keen and clever thinking; it is the consequence of seeking after God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of living for the best and truest things in this life with heart and mind and conscience thus attuned to the whispers of eternity.

Too many of us take it for granted that faith such as transformed the lives of the apostles was only to be found in an age when men lived very simply and knew nothing of the problems of modern life. This is not true. Faith has been a major incentive to self-forgetful action in all ages. It was a genuine inner assurance of something guaranteed in the nature of things which caused Latimer to say to Ridley, as the flames leaped up around them both: "Be of good comfort, Mark Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

John Drinkwater, the English playwright, has expressed something of the true meaning of faith in his play *Oliver Cromwell*. He lets us look in on a conversation between Oliver and the Mayor of Ely just after the first clash of arms with the forces of King Charles at Edgehill. Cromwell says:

"Our troops are most of them old decayed serving men, and tapsters, and such kind of fellows; and their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons, and persons of quality. Do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen that have honor, and courage, and resolution in them! We must get men of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go, or we shall be beaten still. We must raise such men as have the fear of God before them, such men as make some conscience of what they do."

It was primarily because Cromwell did come to lead men of faith and conscience that these men in time defeated opponents who were renewed for their honor and courage and resolution. And it was

because Cromwell was himself a man of faith and of honor that his leadership was so effective. When his mother at one time expressed her misgivings, Oliver answered:

"We must have none, Mother. We have gone to this in prayer, we must establish it in belief. Every yeoman, all the workers in the land, all courtesy and brave reason look to us. What men hereafter shall make of their lives must be between them and God in their own hearts. But today it must be given to them, the right to live as they most truly may in the light of their own proper character. No king may be against us. He may lead us, but he may not be against us. Have no misgivings, Mother. Faith everywhere, that is our shield."

In similar spirit, it seems to me that if some inspired genius should write one day the story of the American people, it is not by any means unthinkable that he should take his cue from the Hebrew letter and write:

By faith Lehi and Nephi, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, left behind them a civilization which had become corrupt and sailed to a land shadowing with wings far beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.

By faith Columbus sailed westward, ever westward, which was his course, coming at last to a new land, held in reserve for a new people.

By faith the Pilgrim Fathers left their homes in Europe and after many adventures landed on the stern and rock-bound coast of New England, seeking and finding freedom to worship God, and being chosen of him as our spiritual forefathers.

By faith Washington endured as seeing the invisible, while the Founding Fathers fashioned a Constitution for free men.

By faith Jefferson secured by purchase land which now provides homes for many millions, although this land was then regarded as useless and inaccessible.

By faith Lincoln preserved the Union, freed the slaves, and with charity for all and malice toward none pointed the way toward a wider and truer brotherhood.

By faith our Fathers crossed the prairies as of old their fathers had crossed the sea, advancing the frontier and becoming a great people.

And what shall I say of those who by faith crossed rivers dry-shod, tunneled through the mountains, and made the desert to blossom as the rose?

Of those who harnessed the tides, who conquered tropical fevers, who succored the poor, who abolished the slums, who filled the world with light, who lifted men into the heavens?

And all these, having wrought a great work through faith, yet received not the fullness of the life that is yet to be, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.<sup>7</sup>

The whole structure of society rests on this kind of faith, which is simply the heartfelt assurance that what most truly ought to be can be, and that it is worth striving for. Without faith like this there is no real progress, and there is no social heroism. And without faith in God, all lesser faiths soon come to naught.

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 11:1. <sup>2</sup> Hebrews 11:7. <sup>3</sup> Hebrews 11:8-10. <sup>4</sup> Hebrews 11:24.  
<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 1:1. <sup>6</sup> Romans 5:1, 2. <sup>7</sup> Adapted from the paraphrase of E. E. Slosson, *Sermons of a Chemist*, pages 90, 91.

# HAVE FAITH IN GOD

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## WHY FAITH MATTERS

ONE REASON WHY FAITH IN God is especially important is that if God exists at all then he is the most vital factor in human experience. If God exists at all, he is more important than anything else or anyone else. He cannot take second place. Moreover, his influence touches everything and every relationship. We cannot fully understand anything or any activity until we see it in relation to God and to his purpose. He is more intimately related to the affairs of our daily lives than any king is related to the affairs of his kingdom. This thought was in the mind of the Apostle Paul when he reminded the saints in Rome that a godless civilization is doomed. He wrote:

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, . . . God also gave them up"; and because they "changed the truth of God into a lie . . . God gave them up"; and because "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind."<sup>1</sup>

Mazzini, the truly great Italian patriot of a century ago, wrote, "I do not know a single great conquest of the human spirit, a single important step for the perfecting of human society, which had not its roots in strong religious faith. Without God you may coerce but you cannot persuade, you may be tyrants in your turn, but you cannot be educators or apostles."<sup>2</sup> Sir Phillip Gibbs put the same central idea somewhat more roughly when he said: "At all costs we must re-establish faith in spiritual values. Somehow we must believe in God or go to the devil. We must worship something beyond ourselves, lest we destroy ourselves."<sup>3</sup>

Many of the problems confronted by faith today arise from the great wealth of things and of ideas which our generation is sharing for the first time. These riches have accumulated so rapidly that we

are bewildered. Like a poor family which strikes oil, our standards of value have been upset. Such old values as simplicity and honor and cleanliness and truth are still important; but we have forgotten their importance because we are dazzled by our new cars and telephones and planes and radios. To hear us talk, or to watch us strut, anyone would think that we had put the oil in the ground in the first place; and that we ourselves are responsible for the intelligence and the physical strength to apply this oil to our own purposes. Really, our Senior Partner has invested much more in the business of life than we have. We need to keep this in mind, for if we cannot recapture our sense of proportion, we are likely to become as obnoxious as any other newly rich. We shall never be sure of our own rightful place until we learn to uphold God in his rightful place.

At its best, faith in God is humble and grateful without being either diffident or apologetic. Without God, we can do nothing; but with him, we have done something. Recent generations of thinkers and explorers have come to know many wonderful things about God's universe which men of earlier generations never suspected. God has given us these new insights in order that we shall be able to fit into the universe to better advantage, and that we shall be able to see him at work where previously we could not trace his hand. The faith of our generation must still be an abiding confidence in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it should be a more enlightened confidence than was ever possible before. It is this fact that faith seeks to become more understanding, as well as more devoted, which makes Christianity more and more important in our growing world.

Yet while it is true that our faith must grow so as to keep pace with our growing knowledge of the universe, it must also take into account both the ancient tyrannies and the ancient virtues. Our faith must give us power over the persistent enemies of mankind—over sin and pain and fear and death. And it must also make a way for the ancient virtues—for love and truth and pity and compassion and generosity and courage and peace. The faith which shall do all this for us can be no new creation. It must be the ancient faith applied as it was intended to be applied to the problems and passions and

glories of life as they arise. It must be the faith which enables us to say with confidence and with a sense of power, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."<sup>4</sup>

One of the hallmarks of our modern civilization is our growing ease in handling the externals of life. We are accustomed to getting things done by quick mechanical means. We say, "Let there be light and heat and power"; and light and heat and power hasten to do our bidding. But this very fact seems to be breeding in us a growing impatience and futility in the presence of pain and loneliness and frustration. So long as he is fed and housed and amused, the average man is "untroubled by a spark." That way lies fatty degeneration of the soul, from which only a vigorous and challenging faith can save us. Genuine faith begets courage and hope and steadfast purpose; such faith enables men to survive defeat very much as training enables them to win a race.

Faith is a major force in creative accomplishment and is at its best in the moment of attack. It was the revelation that the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob still cared for his people that gave the fugitive Moses the courage to return to Egypt and the ability and patience to mold the Hebrew slaves into a nation. It was his confident trust in his Father which gave Jesus the courage and the vision to go to his death on Calvary, assured that God could use even this sacrifice to win men to righteousness. Only such faith as this can make us victors in the struggle of the best against the second best, and good men cannot escape this struggle.

Doubt and suspicion rob a man of his best weapons before he is well started in the battle of life. Faith, and the hope which it engenders, on the other hand, arm and mount him. Many years ago Dr. Felix Adler was asked to address a group of Negro students. Dr. Adler is a Jew and therefore knows the disheartening blight of public disfavor. He accepted the invitation gladly; he sympathized with the students because so many doors of opportunity had been shut in their faces; and then flung this challenge, "But there is one thing of which



no one can rob you, and that is the companionship of the great." He pointed out that any man who really wishes to do so can join hands with the great prophets and teachers of all races; with men like Epictetus, who was a slave but who was also a great philosopher; with Amos, a herdsman, who was also a prophet of social righteousness; with Lincoln, a rail splitter, who was also the savior of his country; and with a host of others whose genius has lifted them above the limitations of race and time and has made them the companions of greatness everywhere.

Faith in God is genuinely related to hope and to goodness. No one can have faith in evil. That is a contradiction in terms. Faith has in its heart the assurance of immortality, but sin has in its heart the seeds of its own destruction. It is good, sane sense, in line with the trends of history, to have faith in the love of justice that is in the heart of the common man and not to be too greatly impressed by the seeming strength of a corrupt political machine. With such faith, men will strive until the day dawns. Without it, they die in the night.

In every generation the builders of the best, in things spiritual as well as in things material, must walk by faith and not by sight. Yet the faith of today can justify itself reasonably in contemplating the solid achievements of the faith of yesterday. Samuel put his trust in God, and when that trust was vindicated against all the probabilities, he "took a stone and set it between Mizpeh and Shem, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."<sup>6</sup> He wanted the children of Israel to remember that God could be trusted. Many years later, the Apostle Paul told the Corinthian Saints that God has chosen "things which are not, to bring to naught things that are."<sup>6</sup> It did not then seem possible that God could use the faith and hope and courage of his people to bring low the wickedness which walked securely in high places. But the years have vindicated Paul. Barbarous games, the exposure of children, hopeless and cruel slavery, flagrant and unashamed public graft, and similar aspects of the daily life of those times have now been completely abolished or are under unrelenting attack. The great social pioneers of today have learned this lesson. It is no accident that so many of

these reforms have definitely Christian motivation and background. Men of faith count on God, even when they themselves feel weak or their opponents appear specially strong.

During the First World War the Allied leaders proclaimed it a war to guarantee a world fit for heroes to live in. What kind of world would that be? A world of ease and of guaranteed security? What place would heroes have there, and what would happen to their heroism? No. A world fit for heroes is a world in which proved heroism can be further devoted to worthy ends. And what ends are more worthy than those which are invisible to men whose eyes have been blinded by worldliness but which can yet be seen by the eyes of faith? What goals are more rightly and more surely ours than those which at first seem unattainable; but which nevertheless beckon all whose hearts are quickened with courage and the love of God?

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 1: 21-28. <sup>2</sup> *Duties of Man*, by Mazzini, quoted by permission, from Everyman's Library. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., published in U. S. A. <sup>3</sup> In *If I Were a Preacher*, page 114. <sup>4</sup> Psalm 90: 1, 2. <sup>5</sup> I Samuel 7: 12. <sup>6</sup> I Corinthians 1: 28.

# HAVE FAITH IN GOD

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## WE CAN HAVE FAITH IN GOD

**I**F WE CAN TAKE OUR CHOICE as to whether we will stand with Moses and Jesus and Paul and the other heroes of faith, or with Pilate and Caiaphas and their doubting spiritual descendants, there is no question where we will be found. When we think most clearly and feel most deeply and act most truly, we want to be on the Lord's side. For if we can honestly feel that our best Friend stands within the shadows, "keeping watch above his own," then we are rich in the things of the Spirit, and strong with a strength which surpasses the strength of man. What would we not give, for example, to be able to share fully the testimony of Paul:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."<sup>1</sup>

In the long run, what any man or nation is to become depends on what that man or that nation believes about things eternal.

But we cannot have faith just because we want to have faith. For those who have grown up in homes of faith, it is natural to believe. But even such fortunate ones must at some time face life in the raw, and life propounds hard questions for those who are determined to be honest, and not to be deluded even by their own heart's love. If God is worth believing in, we must believe that he wants us to believe in him with our eyes open. Faith must not hide, afraid of the light,

lest the light eventually seek it out and show it up for what it really is—not faith at all, but childish credulity or worse. Faith must face the facts—all the facts which life cares to present—and must grow strong enough to meet them with the courage of tested confidence and insight.

Nor can we have faith just when we want to have faith. For few of us does the flame of faith always burn steadily, unflickering, no matter how fiercely the winds of adversity may blow. Rather do we have our days of clear insight and then other days when the best that we can do is to remember the vision of the mountaintop as we plod along in the valley. Physical disability, unemployment, pain, and suffering in the lives of those we love, the apparent heedlessness of life itself—these and many other things constantly militate against our peace. But we can, nevertheless, achieve a mood of faith which will become more and more constant as experience vindicates the faith of yesterday, immature though it may have been, because it has brought us thus far and because it may now be enlarged.

The good man does not live entirely above the level of doubt. Instead, he lives by faith and resolves his doubts as he goes along. Some of the problems which have bothered him never are solved. They just cease to be important. Others remain important and trouble some, and still others cannot be answered until more evidence is available. But this does not justify the believer in acting as if he had no basis for belief; nor does he so act. He knows that his best means of solving the more difficult questions which perplex him is surely to act in the light of the best that he sees and feels and understands and this proves true in experience. Faith thrives and grows in overcoming the challenges presented by the ugly facts of life; and in mastering these difficulties it becomes strong and able and confident. Without such conflict, faith tends to degenerate into mere credulity.

In the midst of our doubts, it is well to remember that, if we are in a questioning mood, even our doubts should be questioned. When John the Baptist needed reassurance, he sent one of his disciples to the Master with the question, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" And the Master answered, in effect: "Tell John that I

know he finds some of these things difficult to understand, but what better explanation can he find for what I am doing. Difficult as it may be to believe, not to believe is even more difficult in view of the facts."<sup>2</sup> It was in this mood, too, that Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind:

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and declare thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof?"<sup>3</sup>

The Psalmist wrote many years ago, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Dr. Jowett suggests that the "fool" here referred to is not necessarily a man lacking in intelligence, but a man who has acted foolishly and whose wish is father to his thought. Such a man may well say, as if in self-justification, "It is all right. I do not need to fear. There is no God." But this man is no safe guide, no matter whom he may be, for he has a vested interest in unbelief. If I myself have been that kind of person, the principle is still true. My judgment is swayed by my desire for self-justification. Now is the time to doubt my own doubts, to take hold of the assurances of the men of faith, and to win through to my own convictions on the basis of their knowledge and my own reformation.

Every reasonable and earnest man who goes out in search of a faith that will endure can carry with him the assurance of finding the Great Companion by his side as he continues his journey. But it is neither fair nor reasonable to act on the assumption that God does not exist and then expect him to force our understanding. The air around us is invisible, but we breathe it and live. The evidence of God's love is all around us, too; and we can breathe this in and live. Or, of course, we can shut up our hearts, and our powers of loving and of serving, and die for lack of sustenance just as sick folk once used to shut themselves up in stuffy rooms and die for lack of the very air

they denied themselves. But we have grown beyond this. There has been evidence enough of the fact of God, and of his loving care for mankind, to convince many men of intellect and integrity. It is not too much, then, to expect that we shall act on the assumption that God is, and try to live as any worthy Creator would expect us to live. Meager though this is, if we will follow through, it is enough.

The whole structure of society rests on adventures of faith, on the balance of probabilities. We trust men whom we have never seen with personal and business concerns of vital importance to us. We commit our loved ones to the care of medical men whose competence we are unqualified to judge, and to "specialists" whose very language is beyond us. In time of war we surrender privileges bought with our fathers' blood and dearer than life itself to us and to our children, in the confident expectation that men of courage will take them back, if need be, when the crisis is past. If ordinary men thus live by faith, shall not men who seek to be in tune with the Infinite take the balanced risks involved in the adventure of religious faith, and so win through to eternity?

This is the only practical approach to the problem of belief. If we do not have faith enough of our own at the beginning of the adventure, then we should borrow some just to get started. Little children do this constantly, and there is nothing wrong about it except when men try to live on the borrowed spiritual capital for the remainder of their lives. It is neither scientific nor reasonable to ignore the spiritual intimations of our own hearts and minds, nor to disregard the testimony of men and women whose lives show that they have learned the secrets of higher living. And there is always the risk that if we start the journey from unfaith to faith without companionship, we shall be lost on the way when we might have traveled in company and in safety.

Nor, finally, is it wise of us to place too great emphasis on our modernity, as though only our generation is competent to speak of ultimates. By any reasonable test Jesus speaks in this realm with an authority which far surpasses that of any other witness whom we might call. Jesus faced life as it was known to the ancients—sordid,

unhealthy, degenerate. He knew the burden of economic injustice, the cruelty of military dictatorship, the scandal of wickedness in high places. Cherishing even the foreshadowings of brotherhood among his friends, he was nevertheless constantly betrayed by their unbrotherliness. When the time came for him to die, he went to his death alone, unaccompanied by a single understanding and courageous friend. Yet for him God was still to be trusted; and his life and death and his continuing power in the lives of men are inexplicable if we do not take his word for the fact that God was with him.

Jesus never argued about God. He lived with God even while he lived among men, and his life is the demonstration of the primacy of faith which now calls men of good intention to make a venture for God. No evidence which may now be adduced can ever nullify what he so nobly demonstrated. The scepticism of ten thousand cannot outweigh the testimony of such a champion. If we lack faith, we cannot beget it by wishing that things were different; and if our faith is weak, we cannot make it strong by wishing that we were more stalwart; but whatever our need, we have evidence enough to justify us in making a venture. And no man who has ventured with God for a partner, and has persisted, has ever failed in his enterprise.

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 8: 35, 37-39. <sup>2</sup> This is not the exact wording of Matthew 11: 2-6, but I think that it does represent the spirit of the incident. <sup>3</sup> Job 38: 1-6.

## HAVE FAITH IN GOD

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### FAITH MUST BE COMPREHENSIVE

THE WORST ENEMY OF STALWART faith is a comfortable or self-satisfied faith, and at times this enemy besets all of us. Any one who is spiritually satisfied tends to become spiritually inert and to imagine that this is a sign of strength. Foremost in the group who are specially tempted by this inertia are those who have achieved comparative material security, and especially those who have never lacked this security and who add to it an interest in books and music and drama and the other cultural pursuits of our time. Their spiritual energies tend to be dissipated in a thousand and one generous impulses and in as many minor interests, and yet they rarely get to grips with the naked problems of life as these are known among less fortunate people. Faith is always sickly when it is not kept at work.

This is not to say that security and cultural interests are necessarily evil. On the contrary, they minister to faith and to life itself if they are not allowed to become dominant. But no man has a right to live securely by shutting himself off from the problems of life which surround him and which threaten the well-being of his fellows.

We can get along for a time with a consuming interest in some minor aspect of life. The joy of the artist and of the musician and of the craftsman and of the man with a hobby all bear testimony to this. But these interests fail to satisfy us all the time, precisely because every man is more than an artist, more than a musician, more than a craftsman, and more than a hobbyist. We were made so that we do not live fully until we live beyond our own interests and find ourselves deeply involved in the lives of others, and in life itself as it reaches into the unseen. Just as a fish can live only in the water, and as a bird takes naturally to the air, so also does the faith of a good man cause him to soar to the higher altitudes of insight



and fellowship, where he finds himself at one with God and with his brethren.

The fact that we need to be in contact with the visible world is no denial of this need for the unseen world. Sooner or later the lesser gods pall on us. Sooner or later a narrow and circumscribed faith proves inadequate. Sooner or later we must find a faith that is big enough, true enough, to satisfy the whole of our nature, or to give such clear promise of satisfying the best we can be that it will keep us striving toward that best. The worship of lesser things is idolatry, and as Studdert Kennedy has said, "The worship of idols is like the taking of drugs, it ends in desperation."<sup>1</sup>

Faith strong enough to fit us for noble and constructive life cannot rest on a foundation of sand. It must be faith in God, built on the rock. As Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth: "Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, faith cannot *stand* in the wisdom of men. If it rests there only, it will be washed away as surely as the riverside shacks are swept away by the flooding Missouri.

Yet even though it is imperative that our faith shall truly be faith in the living God, it is also imperative that our faith shall be equipped to deal with modern realities and that it shall be informed by knowledge which is still being won. This is not to say that faith in God goes hand in hand with a college degree, for that is manifestly untrue. Many a simple soul has surer contact with Divinity than his college-bred grandson. But it is to say that we can only justify our faith in the eyes of our fellows if we can honestly hold that faith in the light of the knowledge of our generation. We must be able to "give a reason for the hope that is in us."<sup>3</sup> Such faith must emerge from experience with God today.

Faith, comprehensive enough to strength us for all the vicissitudes of life, cannot be won in a moment. It may and should be directly related to the simple faith of childhood; but with the passing of the years and the growth of experience, it should blossom into maturity and power. It should be big enough to bring guidance and strength in failure as well as in success, in defeat as well as in victory. It

should bring us in time to the point where we can say with the Psalmist, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." This is but another way of saying that faith, for mature men in a modern age, must be unafraid. It must be the faith of men who face the facts of life as we have come to know them. It must not shrink from what the scientist and the doctor and the research worker have to tell us about God's way of working in the universe, even though it will not permit these specialists to dictate to it. Our faith must be the faith of men who love the truth and who are assured by their faith that the truth, when properly understood, will always point toward God at work in the world.

We are in the midst of the greatest revolution of thought that the world has ever known. Science is giving us an entirely different picture of the universe than that held by our fathers. The new theories now being formulated are likely to influence the thought and action of the future as deeply as the Copernican theory has influenced the thinking of the past three centuries. But in the face of this fact, the courageous man of faith goes forward unafraid because he is sure that no matter what we discover about the universe in which we live we shall always need God, and that we shall always find him available to the faithful.

Faith in the orderly processes of nature is the rock on which the scientist stands to do his work, for he knows that if he cannot be sure of this orderly process, life can have no stability and there will be no science. In the light of this faith, he makes his observations and draws his conclusions; and if for a moment these seem to contradict his faith, he looks around intently to find some further facts which will resolve the apparent contradiction. If this further search does not solve his problem, he does not abandon his faith. The conviction that nature is orderly is too well founded to be thus lightly tossed aside. Instead of apostatizing from the truth as known to science, he therefore decides that he does not yet have all the evidence which he needs, and so he goes ahead to make further observations, and to suggest further tentative conclusions, in the assured certainty that sometime someone will find the key, and that then the truth will be

understood more clearly than ever, while his faith stands more sure.

In a similar way, faith in the common people is the rock on which the leader of a democracy stands to do his work. By the light of this faith he trusts men with opportunities for education, he promotes and defends freedom of the press and of assembly, he safeguards the rights of minorities, he stands for "open agreements openly arrived at." And he continues to do these things as long as his faith continues to be strong, despite the fact that near-by dictators seem for the moment to be building more rapidly than he by regimenting their underlings and driving them like cattle.

Life demands faith such as this, faith which makes for progressive stability in the midst of disruptive change. But just because life is more than science, or affairs, or education, faith for living must be more surely grounded than faith for science, or than faith for government, or than faith for education. Faith for living has to do with the use of power and abilities, with meeting pain and defeat and death, with the worth-whileness of right doing, with time and eternity. Without a faith comprehensive enough to support him in all these aspects of life, a man must sooner or later fall short of his best and truest possibilities. The only faith great enough to stand in any circumstance is faith in God; and even though this faith may seem to be decried by the temporary situation, it is supported by such a wealth of experiences and is in such full harmony with the best thought of the greatest of our sages, that wise men retain their faith in crises and seek patiently for the emergence of the facts which can explain seeming contradictions.

Faith must be comprehensive enough to make room for facts which are only now being discovered or are yet to be unearthed; and it must be patient with small facts which parade as big ones and so attract more attention than they really merit. Faith must also be comprehensive enough and patient enough to make room for the drama of living which has stirred men, both small and great, from the beginning of time. It must make room for birth and death, for love and tears, for success and failure. All this means that faith comprehen-

sive enough for life is not the prized possession of the intellectual, nor of any other man who lives narrowly and alone. It is the attitude taken toward life by the man or woman whose broad and deep sympathies lead down many paths, and who finds God walking beside him in every path wherein he walks worthily.

We can know God in this age as surely as he has been known in any age. Our explanation of the eternal mystery of godliness may not be phrased exactly as it has been phrased before; but the core of experience with God will be real; and in this reality our faith will be justified.

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<sup>1</sup> *Food for the Fed-up*, by G. A. Studdert Kennedy, page 16. Published by permission of Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc. <sup>2</sup> I Corinthians 2: 5. <sup>3</sup> I Peter 3: 15.

## GOD CARES FOR US

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### WE CAN HAVE FAITH IN GOD AS CREATOR

WE CAN HAVE FAITH IN God as creator. Many wise and able people do have such faith. But we cannot *prove* that God is creator in the same way that we can prove the simpler statements of mathematics. Strange as it might seem, this is no argument against faith. It cannot be "proved" that Beethoven is a great composer. This is a verdict reached and agreed in by thousands of people who understand and appreciate good music, but which a great many other people cannot understand. It cannot be "proved" that a fine picture is beautiful. This is the common verdict of millions of people, but it is not shared by the blind. You can believe something from the bottom of your heart without having any arguments for your belief which are so strong that other people are forced to accept them. This does not mean that you are wrong in so believing, but only that the strength of the evidence for belief depends upon something more than logic.

When we say that we have faith in God as creator, we mean that he is the best explanation we can discover for things as they are. No other explanation of the world in which we live, its nature and meaning, is so satisfying to the mind and heart of a sincere seeker as the conviction that God is the creator of all things. It is not a truth which is written in words as big as mountains or uttered in accents of thunder. It is not a proclamation before which the mind of man must quail; it is rather the conviction which grows in the soul of a good man when he opens his heart to the testimony of the truth and the beauty and the goodness which surrounds him. And it is a conviction which grows stronger and stronger the more fully we live by it.

The artist who responds to beauty around him becomes more and more sure of its reality as it shapes his life. So, too, the good man who responds to the best that he knows becomes constantly more certain that God is and that he is the explanation for everything else.

Let us approach the problem of faith in God as creator by supposing for a moment that there is no God. If this were true, then the world must just have come into being of itself and by reason of powers within itself. This is extremely difficult to believe. Indeed, all our experience is against such belief. It is a statement beyond ultimate logical proof just as much as our assertion of the existence of God is beyond logical proof. When we examine it carefully, the idea that the universe just happened really seems so preposterous that it can only be held by people who are determined not to believe in God because they have a mistaken idea that they can only believe in what can be seen and handled.

It may be suggested that the world came into being, as it now exists, by the process of evolution. But relating things as they are to things as they were does not explain how matter originally came into being, nor why it changed gradually into its present form, nor how it made the change, nor why it did not start earlier and get here sooner. To say that there is no God is to say that there is in the universe some blind force which in spite of being blind, nevertheless works steadily upward and progressively forward, until out of the inert comes the living, out of the animal comes the human, out of the merely human evolves the man with sensibilities and desires and aspirations toward divinity. This is harder to believe than it is to believe in the God of Christianity.

Logic and mathematics teach us that when one of two possible solutions is unbelievable, then the other solution must be true. Every time we see how difficult it is to believe that there is no God behind creation, we should be strengthened in our conviction that God is the final explanation of creation.

Our approach at this point does not have to be thoughtful only. We have as strong an obligation to feel deeply and truly as we do to

think deeply and truly. Does it *feel* right to contemplate man alone on the pinnacle of nature, having no heroes greater than himself, no leader and commander, no friend who understands and yet loves him? Along the path of such loneliness lies madness.

The evidences for believing in God as creator, however, are not merely negative. They are both affirmative and strong. Let us look at some of them.

Note first, the trends of life. The carefully cultivated tea rose which we so much admire tends naturally to degenerate into a common hedge rose unless the care which produced it is continued. The Shasta daisy will have children and grandchildren which are much more like their remote ancestor, the common daisy, than they are like the Shasta, unless something is done to maintain the improved stock. Fine fruit and domesticated animals follow the same trend. The only way to develop fine stock is through careful breeding. Behind all the improvement that we know or can trace, there is something like personal thought and effort. The trend is downward unless something happens to turn it upward. And yet the general trend throughout the universe which we call "evolution" is steadily upward. Why should we presume that this trend upward, in spite of innate tendencies downward, is accidental. Is it not much more reasonable to believe that someone stands behind the world as we know it, and supplies the vision and the power which make our universe a going concern? Blind nature has no such upward drive. It is admitted that all the evidence is not yet in, but such evidence as we have certainly points toward someone who is doing something in the universe, rather than to a series of unrelated accidents which just happened to bring us to the place where we are.

The trends which we have observed around us can also be discerned within us. Whenever a man is at his best, he feels within him a call to be better than he now is. Even the most careless person has occasions when he feels a fundamental dissatisfaction with himself, a sense of guilt that he is not better than he is, a deep desire to be more nearly what he ought to be. But the strange thing about this

inner urge is that whenever a man seeks to be true to his ideal, that ideal itself advances and constantly demands more of him. The better a man is, the more sure he is that he ought to be better yet. The nearer he is to God, the more he realizes the importance of getting nearer still. It is the saint who feels the burden of his sins, while the sinner goes on his way apparently quite heedless of his shortcomings. The ideal within us, then, gradually reveals itself to us as we grow toward it. We do not create this ideal. Rather it creates us. There is a power at the heart of our moral life which is akin to the force at the heart of nature which we call evolution, and this power tends upward in spite of other forces which tend downward. Does this just happen? No! It is God at work, and at work every moment. We have not arrived where we are by accident, but by design, and this design is as apparent in the moral realm as it is in the physical.

The finest leader we have found for the struggle of life is Jesus. Others may seem to offer us more attractive adventures than he does, but it is Jesus who actually gives us soul satisfaction in discipleship. He may not appeal to the coward, but he is the hero of the heroes. And as we come to know Jesus, we find that every characteristic of the ideal which urges us from within is but a revelation of the kind of person Jesus was. If we feel that we should be more honest, then Jesus is our final example. If we feel that we should be more clean, then Jesus is our best pattern. If we feel that we should demonstrate greater courage, then Jesus leads the way to victory. As we know him, he becomes our ideal. But as we know him, we come to recognize also that Jesus is not just another man. He is the Son of God—God made manifest in the flesh.

It is not an accident that we feel inside us that we ought to be better than we are; it is God who is revealed in our own better nature, and who is more fully revealed in Jesus, our elder brother. The work of creation is not finished. It is still going forward, both in us and around us; and God is at the heart of it.

At their best, men look forward and plan for the years ahead.



They build cathedrals that will outlast the centuries and plan victories which they will not live to enjoy, sacrificing themselves eagerly for the benefit of generations yet to come. Men are not the only beings who thus make provision for the future, but they are the only earthly beings who do so intelligently, knowing what they are doing and why they act as they do. When the bees store up honey in the comb, and when the birds make nests for eggs that are not yet laid, these, too, are working for the future. But their provision for the tomorrow is not the result of their own forethought. We say that they work by instinct; but "instinct" is only another name for a mind akin to the mind of an able man and yet evidently much more far-seeing than the mind of any mere man. It is the mind of God, the creator, who works here and everywhere in the lives of those whom he has created for their preservation and blessing.

Men have believed in God for many, many generations, long before any such arguments as the foregoing were first advanced. Indeed, belief in the existence of God, the creator of all things, is not only found among civilized peoples but among savage peoples as well, and as far back as we can delve into history. Despite fashions of thought which trend the other way, mankind as a whole believes in God, the creator. This of itself is not conclusive evidence of the fact that God does exist, but it is very constructively suggestive. All our reasoning about God is but our way of explaining what we feel in the depths of our being; and our response to the fact of the universe. The verdict of humanity is that God is our creator.

## GOD CARES FOR US

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### WE CAN HAVE FAITH IN A PERSONAL GOD

WE HAVE CONSIDERED WHETHER we can believe in God at all; but the major problem for most of us is not whether we can believe in the existence of God, but whether we can believe in God as a person. Many find it difficult to do this. They find it easier to believe that God is "the energy behind the universe," or even that he is the sum total of the universe, rather than that he is the one who delights in "keeping watch above his own." Yet there is no doubt that if we can honestly believe in God who loves us, this will bring into our lives a warmth and a beauty which we cannot know in any other way.

We need a faith for living; a faith which shall call us to action and which shall give us hope and courage and peace. We need a faith that life has resources for the soul. We do not want to be carried through life and lifted bodily over its hurdles, for we know that that is not the way to develop spiritual strength; but we do want sympathetic help which will not only sustain us in difficulty but which will also aid us in running the good race. When the Apostle Paul was on trial for his life and his friends could not be with him, he nevertheless faced the ordeal with courage and almost with gaiety, because he felt that the Lord was standing by him. This is the kind of faith that we need. Our question is then, can we, in view of the facts known to the modern man, have faith in a personal God?

Such faith as we need must be centered in a wise and patient friend. It is true that there is a sense in which we can have faith in a machine, but faith in this sense is almost equivalent to confidence in mechanical perfection. There is no warmth of response in such faith, but rather a feeling of confidence that nothing can change the machine's smooth performance. The faith that we need to hearten us

in the battle of life is a responsive relationship between persons; a warm confidence on our part based on our growing love of God. We can never say of a machine, "We love him because he first loved us"; but this is the highest expression of the faith of the Saints. Faith at its best must have a personal quality; it must go from one person to another. Even when we say that we have faith in a policy or in a procedure or in an idea, this implies trust in the person or persons behind the policy or in the power of the idea to move persons to respond.

What we have already said points yet farther: faith relates to action. To have faith in a great cause means that we have confidence that this cause will triumph; that it will meet certain needs or solve vexing problems adequately. Similarly, to have faith in God means to have confidence in God in action; to be willing to further his plans for humanity. That kind of faith cannot exist between a man and a machine. It cannot exist between intelligent men and some blind force which we call nature. We can have the kind of faith we need to live by only if it is centered in God who is a person, and who moves purposefully to do what rightfully concerns him.

Many of us have difficulty in thinking of God as personal because we have inadequate ideas of what we mean by personality. The only persons whom we know are strictly limited in many ways. They are limited by lack of wisdom and understanding; there are times when they are selfish and unloving; they are "in the flesh." Because of this we sometimes think that such limitations apply to all persons. This is not so. Personality is life in its most highly developed form. When we say we believe that God is personal, we mean that he gathers up in himself all the best attributes that we have met in the persons we know, but that these attributes are not tarnished or limited in any way.

One of the reasons why we can believe that God is personal is because he has done so many delightful and distinctively personal things. For example, why is life arranged just as it is? Consider music: who decided that it should be a universal language and delight,

and that it should be found in the sighing of the wind and the roaring of the surf and the cadences of the human voice; and that we should be able to produce it by blowing down the hollow in a piece of wood, or plucking a wire, or striking a bell, or scraping some carefully prepared gut? Or again, how did it come to pass that tropical fish are so beautifully and so individually marked? Does it not look as though someone had a good time making them? Is it sacrilegious to think that God chuckled when he made pearls attractive to beauty-loving women and then buried them in an oyster shell in the bottom of the sea?

In a generation which has come to recognize the essential orderliness of things, we rightfully appreciate what we call "the reign of law"; but we go too far when this recognition of order in the universe leads us to believe that we are governed by a fate which leaves no room for freedom either in God or man. The testimony of our experience is against this. The laws of nature, by which we mean the trustworthiness of its sequences of cause and effect, give us power to mold nature to our own purposes. If we could not trust nature to be consistent, we could not build anything. Water might run uphill, a bridge might hang suspended on nothing one day and fall into a ravine the next, peas might come up where we had planted beans, and to get a bad cold might be the surest way of feeling fit. It is just because we can rely on things that we can assert our will through them; and one of the great characteristics of personality is this power of dominion over the material order. But if men can assert their will by learning and utilizing the laws of nature, how much more can God assert his will, even though by so doing he brings to pass things that seem marvelous in our eyes.

The miracles recorded in the Gospels were a testimony to the companions of Jesus that God is alive, and that he is interested in the work of the world; in short, that he is a person. In a day when so many of us take it for granted without much thought that miracles are past, and that nothing which now happens is beyond scientific explanation, we naturally find it hard to discover evidence of the

movement of a person behind the scene of things. But if we look more carefully, and do not determine the question by approaching it with closed minds, there is abundant evidence of personal direction behind the appearance of things. Just as my life is not fully explained by cataloguing my physical and mental equipment, so also the life of the universe is not explained by adding up the things of which it consists.

This speculation and suggestion is interesting and carries some weight, but it neglects one of the most fundamental aspects of personality. This is the fact that persons are social; they like to get in touch with other persons. If God is personal, therefore, it is not likely he will leave to us the whole task of getting into touch with him. He will come at least half way. And if he is infinitely greater and finer than any person we know, then we may reasonably expect him to devise interesting and subtle ways of making himself known to us, particularly since there is evidence that, like others of the most interesting persons we know, he has a sense of kindly humor which tinctures his affection and concern for us.

One of the things which our modern age has taught us to do is to listen to experts. Of course, we keep checking to see if they really are experts; but so long as we are confident that a man knows more and sees farther than the rest of us, we instinctively accord him authority in his chosen field. Now the greatest experts in the field of religion have been the Jews, and their story of creation starts out, "In the beginning God." We might pass this by with little or no attention, except that sober historians tell us that this simple statement enshrines one of the great ideas of history, an idea which made a wandering tribe into one of the great nations of all time, a people who may be despised and hated, but who cannot be ignored.

The truth which the Jews sought to express through the inspired statement, "In the beginning God," was not primarily an account of creation but an affirmation of purpose in life. Before all things is God; and God acts purposefully. The Hebrews realized that God had brought order out of chaos; and it was this fact which brought

order out of chaos in their own minds. Henceforth all created things were made meaningful by the purpose of God who created them. They sought to understand this purpose, and tried to make it their own; and their attempt at understanding and self-discipline challenged them and made them grow. The petty gods of the ancient world were not big enough for them, but the true and the living God satisfied an inborn hunger in them, just as he has satisfied an inborn hunger in great men from their time forward.

The history of the Hebrew people is illumined by the testimony of prophets and seers who had experience with God, and whose experience appealed to the moral instincts of their people. It is too late now, as well as being unscientific, to deny the facts which are brought before us in the lives and the utterances of these men of spiritual genius. They felt that God was reaching after them and giving them both a message and a commission. Although they lived and testified many years ago, what they then said has stood the scrutiny of the years. Behind every prophetic message stood the conviction that God is, that he loves his children, and that he can be trusted. The prophets served and worshiped a personal God.

The prophets made a great contribution to the true riches of mankind. But the glory of the Christian era lies in the fact that "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son."<sup>1</sup> All that Jesus has told us can be summed up in his composite picture of God as our Father, and perhaps the best single picture that he has left us is in the story of the Prodigal Son. We cannot prove that this story is founded in fact; but in our hearts we know that it is true. The central figure of this marvelous word picture is the father who would not interfere with the wishes of his erring son, but whose love finally brought his boy back from the far country and welcomed him to take his rightful place in the family circle. No one can read the story of the Prodigal Son with his heart and fail to be moved by love for the father. In the eyes of Jesus, God was personality at its best.

Our Heavenly Father has taken the initiative in making himself known to us. He does not wait until we come seeking him, but instead he entices us toward understanding and friendship. Some of his approaches to us are delightful, as when he speaks to us in the beauty that lies in the heart of a flower, or as an artist who painted the wings of a butterfly, or in the instinctive lifting up of the heart on a beautiful day, or beside the sea, or in the mountains, or on a starry night. He speaks in ways which are stern, also, and somber. We hear him in the voice of conscience, in our quick and instinctive resentment against injustice, in the demand that we stand firm and immovable for that which is right, and even in that hour when our souls grope in the darkness for the only one who can comfort and strengthen us.

We ask whether we can honestly believe in a personal God who is not only creator but friend and lover, and our hearts and our experience join to say that only in God whom we so conceive can we confidently place our trust, for it is only friends and lovers that we do trust, and these only when their affection is wedded to wisdom and restraint. The evidence of beauty and novelty in the universe answer "Yes." The evidence of the prophets and seers is "Yes." And the evidence of the greatest expert of all time is "Yes." Can we not stand with Jesus and the prophets and the poets and the seers and with the testimony of the universe itself?

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. 1: 1, 2.

## GOD CARES FOR US

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### WE CAN KNOW GOD

PERSONS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT OTHER *persons*; man's interest in his fellow man is an element of his nature or personality; so, when we say that God is personal, we must agree, too, that he is interested in humanity, or in some such personal beings. This is a very general conclusion, however, and we want to know much more specifically whether he is directly interested in us, and, if so, what the nature of that interest is. A recent writer has met this question very adroitly and with considerable point. He says: "God can scarcely admire us; life would be intolerable for him if he disliked us; however odd it may appear, it is only possible for him to go on if he loves us."<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion here reached stands up under scrutiny. The Creator of the universe has evidently taken a great deal of trouble to make the kind of universe which best suits his purpose. As we study the universe so as to discover this purpose, we find the world an excellent place in which men can live and learn nobility. It is a school for developing character. Moreover it is peopled with persons who, despite all their limitations, do actually share personality with the Creator himself. This means that if the Creator has the necessary interest and patience, there is something in men which will make it possible for him to communicate with them so that they can understand his will as none of his lesser creation can ever understand. If we were coming into the world situation afresh, then, and examining it for the first time, we would expect to find some evidences of God, the Creator, seeking to make known to men the purpose of creation and, possibly, something about the world which has been made for the home of mankind. It would be quite unlike the Architect and



Builder of our destinies to prepare such a home and then to fail to tell his chief tenants about it. You would expect him, rather, to explain his plans to them as fully as possible.

This is exactly what God has done. The signature of the Creator is written clearly in the margin of all that he has made. Moreover, his handiwork is not unresponsive, just bearing his name stolidly and without pride. On the contrary, the whole of creation sings his praises. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."<sup>2</sup> Each according to its nature tells of its creator: the rocks and hills, the land and ocean, the infinitely great and the infinitely small, all living and moving things. Yet while each of these reveals something of God, all of them are limited by their very nature and cannot appreciate that which they speak forth. They are impersonal. They lack the power of impassioned response. Man shares with all other created things the power to reveal in the perfection of his own body something of the genius of the one who made him, but man stands alone in his power to respond to that genius with appreciation and with co-operative gratitude.

We have been so fashioned that it is possible for us to share the inner life of God. We are not only some of his creation; we are his children and partake of his own nature. That, once again, is what we mean by personality. The personality of divinity is rich and full, while ours is limited and narrow, but our kinship is unmistakable. We are capable of courage and justice and love, and even in a limited way, creation. Our courage, our justice, our love, and our small adventures into the realm of creation, therefore, all give us some hint of the nature of the God in whom courage and justice and love are so brilliantly alive. But there are some men who are particularly adapted to this work of revelation and who are specially chosen to be the agents of Divinity in making himself better known. Such men as Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and Hosea have undoubtedly been especially called and endowed as prophets and seers and revealers of the nature and purpose of Divinity. In this primary field of human

interest they stand out as leaders, just as Shakespeare stands out in the field of literary expression and Michelangelo in art and Mozart in the realm of music.

If we could have stood off from the universe in the early morning of creation, knowing God and knowing man, we would have anticipated the emergence of prophets and seers somewhere along the highway of history. It is like God to want to share his life and his joy in creation with the noblest of his creatures, and the only way to share such riches is in experience. God's telling of his love for us would have been utterly without meaning if we had not first had some experience of love among ourselves. Justice and mercy and honor are but words except as they express relationships among men. The prophets who looked a little way into the heart of God could only make their message clear when they could illustrate it from the life around them and then refine their illustrations. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," said Hosea; and those who heard him understood, because they had seen Mercy struggling to lift her head when she was being crowded out of the way by sacrifices in which she had no part.

Unfortunately the clearest insight of the prophets was limited by their own defective vision. It is not easy to see clearly and accurately. Any man who has even tried to tell his wife what her women friends wore on some special occasion will readily understand this. Any scientist can testify to the difficulty of seeing clearly, for his major task is in seeing things as they are and not through a cloud of preconceived notions about them. Something of the very nature of a man, as well as a great deal of his training, goes into his every act of seeing, and all this has its effect on what is actually perceived.

This is particularly true in the spiritual realm. A hard and cynical man finds it impossible really to understand the generous action of another, because he cannot with sympathetic fellowship enter into the heart of it. Hosea began to sense the unfailing love of God for wayward Israel when his own heart clung to his unfaithful wife; but even then he could not share the full riches of divine understanding

because he did not share the full depth of divine love. In seeking to make God known among their fellows, the prophets could never present a perfect picture, because they themselves were not perfect examples. God could not reveal himself fully through them because they did not reveal him fully in their daily lives.

The prophets all pointed forward to a more complete revelation which was to come. Any of their disciples who lived up to the teachings of the prophets found themselves at last at a point where they needed to go further, but beyond which the prophets could not take them. This is in the nature of things.

We strive always to go beyond frontiers; and so long as there are frontiers of divine understanding to be crossed, the divine whisper urges us to try to cross them. It has been natural, therefore, for good men to seek a supreme revelation of God, one which includes the whole continent of revelation and leaves only the task of exploration, and not the expectancy of something yet beyond.

As we have seen, it was like God to make known to men his mind and will and his very self; but this was impossible as long as he only revealed himself through man. For the revelation to be complete, and for it to answer and satisfy the deepest longings of mankind, it must be a revelation in man. God must walk the earth in the flesh, showing himself to men as a man, if ever the revelation was to be complete and untarnished. Even then foolish men and wicked men who might see God thus veiled in flesh would not truly look on divinity. Having eyes they would not see, and having ears they would not hear, their foolishness and their wickedness having robbed them of understanding. But nevertheless such a revelation of divinity in humanity, of God in man, would bring the nature and purpose of God into understandable terms. God, the creator of the universe, would no longer be afar off. He would be as near as a neighbor and as close as a friend.

It is easy to follow this line of reasoning now, for we know that this is exactly what God did do. What is a little more difficult for us to see is that if our Creator cared for us enough to wish to make

himself fully known to us, this was the only thing he could do. And, conversely, the fact that God has gone so far as to do this shows how very dear we must be to him, and how very eager he is to have us know and love him.

At the very heart of Christianity is the conviction that God took on himself the burden of making himself known to men; and that to this end he accepted the limitations of humanity and lived among us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who was in sober fact God in human guise. There have been an infinite number of attempted explanations of just what this incarnation of God in flesh means, and of how it was brought about. For hundreds of years this was a crucial point in Christian theology. But the fact vastly exceeds our best explanations. In view of the facts available, it is reasonable. Indeed, it was to be expected. Yet in our eyes it continues to be the ultimate miracle of the ages. But while any man may speculate as to the mode and the significance of the incarnation, "the love of Jesus, what it is, none but his loved ones know."

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<sup>1</sup> *God in a World at War*, by John Hadham, Penguin Press, page 53. Quoted by permission of publishers. <sup>2</sup> Psalm 19: 1-3.

## GOD CARES FOR US

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### JESUS REVEALED THE LOVE OF GOD

**I**F OUR FAITH IS TO DO FOR us what we need to have done for us, then it must be faith in the God whom we have come to know through Jesus Christ our Lord. Only faith in God is big enough to arm us to meet successfully the challenges of the hour; and the only way in which we can truly come to know God is as we meet him in the person of Jesus.

The intimate relation existing between God and God manifest in the flesh is difficult to express; and those who have tried to explain it have used a variety of metaphors. The best known of these is the term, "Son of God."<sup>1</sup> Paul used this expression, and by it evidently meant that Jesus shares the nature of divinity as a son shares the nature of his father. Modern revelation adds that the phrase indicates that Jesus grew, as a son grows in the likeness of his father, and did not attain full stature all at once.<sup>2</sup> There are obviously many aspects of sonship as we know it which do not apply to the relationship of Jesus and his Father; but the expression is nevertheless illuminating and helpful.

The Apostle Paul also referred to Christ as the "image [or picture] of the invisible God."<sup>3</sup> This, too, is helpful, both because a good picture expresses the essential character of what is depicted and also because it conveys the idea of a steadfast likeness. All of us are at sometime something like our Heavenly Father; our difficulty is that we do not retain his likeness steadily. But Jesus did. Whenever we see him in action, we have a faithful picture of what God is like.

The Apostle John refers to Christ as the "Word" of God. It is easy for us to miss what John was trying to convey, but the ancients understood clearly. They thought that what a man says is directly

related to what he is, his words express his personality, his creative reasons. The "Word" of God, therefore meant to the early saints the divine nature expressed in human form. Jesus was God expressing himself.

The early fathers of the Christian Church used still another phrase, and while this, too, is somewhat foreign to our present manner of speech, it enshrines the truth in a way which we might well consider. They said, "I believe in . . . one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God . . . Light of Light."<sup>4</sup> The expression "Light of Light" meant essentially light coming from light. Something of what they had in mind will be grasped when we remember that while the sun remains in the heavens we, nevertheless, say quite reasonably that the sun is in a room or in a garden; and by this we mean that the light of the sun is in the room or garden, and that its healing and warming and growing influence is there too. The Apostolic Fathers believed that as God lived in the heavens, so also God lived in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Now the task which God set for himself in the person of Jesus was to continue the work of creation where it had been interrupted by men. We have all been endowed with a wealth of possibilities, and all of these potential powers prophesy a better selfhood, which we could attain if we would only keep our lives pointed in the right direction. God has not finished the work of creation in us; he has only taken us as partners. And as his partners we have betrayed him and turned our lives in wrong directions, so that the fulfillment of creation is thwarted. Jesus lived and died that we might be persuaded to turn round and go eagerly forward with God.

One of the first tasks before us is to learn to see straight. As things are, we have lost our sense of proportion and have given secondary or tertiary things first place, and primary things second, third, or even last place. We squabble over how to divide our inheritance, when the riches of eternal life are available for us if only we will open our eyes.<sup>6</sup> We fuss over the minutæ of the law, and at the same time neglect the truly significant principles of judgment, mercy,

and faith.<sup>7</sup> We bury our talents and for lack of which the world goes hungry.<sup>8</sup> And even after we have enlisted for unselfish service, we still seek the chief seats.<sup>9</sup> This crookedness does not stem primarily from defective insight, but from warped feeling. Our hearts are set on the wrong values. We love comfort more than we love righteousness, and our own way rather than truth in action. Both heart and mind need to be recentered; and if the wrench from what has been to what ought to be is a painful one, it is no less necessary for this fact.

We need to change our attitude toward life. Jesus sought to help his generation to make the adjustment out of delight in righteousness, and not from any external compulsion or from the browbeating of their hearts and minds by facts which were so stupendous as to leave his followers no real choices. To this end, he lived a full and fragrant life, drawing only on resources which are available to any man of any race and any generation, and sharing his riches with all who could be persuaded to try them. This wealth which Jesus had to share was so full and satisfying that it could be enjoyed even in moments of persecution and of infamy.<sup>10</sup> The Master explained this in a series of conversations and wayside sermons, and constantly demonstrated his own reliance on the way of life which he was commending to others. But always the tendency of men to see only what they wanted to see frustrated his purpose; they saw only the lame made to walk, the blind made to see, and the multitude fed. Few of them truly apprehended the root of the message, of which these things were only the fruit. The apostles themselves had all the facts of the Christian message, save possibly one only, when they followed Christ into Jerusalem a week before the Crucifixion. But they were still far from full understanding.

The men who followed Jesus gained a great deal of information. Indeed, they developed an attitude which only needed to be vitalized to become extremely potent. And they recognized that Jesus was more than man. At the very least they knew him to be a great prophet. Some of them differed with him, and became restless as

they sense what his demands would mean to the ambitions they had cherished; and yet the simple rightness of those demands always silenced their doubts. Nevertheless they remained fundamentally unconvinced. In their hearts and minds, and deep down near the wellsprings of action, they were not yet won. The best of them could not follow anyone else;<sup>11</sup> but neither could they be counted on to follow Jesus closely all the way. Evidently his revelation of the invisible God was not yet compelling enough to set them free from the fetters which had been forced on their hearts and minds during generations of self-will and of self-satisfaction. Something had yet to be done to move them.

God did not wait until the "meridian of time" to begin to love men. He loved them from the beginning and, because it is the nature of love to do so, he suffered in all their sufferings from the beginning. When those whom he had brought into being chose death when they might have chosen life, a cross was set up. This too is in the nature of things. Parents who have invested all their thoughts and love in their children, only to have these children sow their wild oats in complete disregard of their thought and love, have some inkling of how our Heavenly Father has felt from the beginning. But not infrequently the sufferings of parents like these become a powerful factor in reclaiming their children. Sins which a young man has thought of as his own business are sometimes seen clearly only when they hurt his loved ones, and a vision of what was happening in the heart of his mother has brought many a young man back to sanity and to sobriety. So in order to make clear the true horror of sin, and at the same time to show how God feels about men, it was necessary for Jesus to go to Calvary. And on Calvary he died for all of us.

Many theories of the atonement have been propounded from time to time. None of them have been adequate, because the love revealed there is greater than any explanation we might offer. But at the center of the best of all these theories is the answer to our question, "Does God Care for Men?" It is an answer which we appre-



hend at Calvary with our hearts as well as with our minds, and which floods our souls with light and peace and power even as it rebukes our many pettinesses:

“When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.”

God has cared enough for us to create us, to counsel us, to shepherd us, to visit us and, at last, to die for us. What he could not have won from us with any display of power or with any threat of coercion, he is winning by the gentle insistence of his love. We may not follow in his way, even yet; but at least when we are at our best we know that we ought to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> Colossians 1: 13. <sup>2</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants* 90: 2. <sup>3</sup> Colossians 1: 15. <sup>4</sup> The *Nicene Creed*. <sup>5</sup> This illustration is taken from *Doubts and Difficulties*, by Cyril Alington, page 77, Longmans, Green & Co., London, Eng. <sup>6</sup> Luke 12: 13-31. <sup>7</sup> Matthew 23: 23. <sup>8</sup> Matthew 25: 14-30. <sup>9</sup> Mark 10: 38, 30; John 21: 21, 22. <sup>10</sup> Matthew 5: 10-12. <sup>11</sup> John 6: 68.

## GOD CARES FOR US

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### GOD STILL CARES FOR MANKIND

BY THE TIME CALVARY HAD BEEN followed by Easter and this in turn by the forty days of the Resurrection and then by the Ascension, the apostles and other disciples of Jesus knew that he alone held the secret of life, and that life had no attraction for them without him. They, therefore, waited with eager expectation for the coming of that Comforter which Jesus had promised, the Spirit of Truth which would testify of Jesus and teach them "all things," reminding them of all that the Master had said and been, and empowering them for every worthy task.<sup>1</sup>

The primary function of the "Comforter" was not to console the saints for the loss of their leader, but rather to strengthen them for the work which he had left for them to do and for the life to which he had called them. This is what the word "Comforter" means in this connection—one who makes strong. It is an old-fashioned word, used here in an almost obsolete sense, but we can get a glimpse of its meaning from one phrase which we all know and which is still in use among us. We talk of giving "aid and comfort to the enemy." This means strengthening or supporting the enemy. In line with this fundamental meaning, both the Twentieth Century and the Moffatt version of John's Gospel use the word "helper" in place of "comforter," and while "helper" may sound strange in ears accustomed to the King James version it does have the merit of eliminating the idea of consolation as the major function of the Holy Spirit.

The promise of Jesus was most generously fulfilled, and soon the Holy Spirit was so richly manifested among the saints that in spite of their love for the Master the disciples never seem to have looked

backward with nostalgic longing on the days that were past. The light of truth which had for a long time been focused in the person of Jesus was not lost with his departure, but instead it was spread abroad and was as unmistakably available as when Jesus was among them in the flesh. Though he was gone, God was still with them.

The work of Jesus had been to reveal God to men, to free men from sin, and to continue the work of creation. This task was now taken up by the Holy Spirit, and the power and influence of the Spirit were immediately evident. Looking back from after Pentecost to tell the story of Jesus, the Apostle John wrote that "the Spirit was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified."<sup>2</sup> I cannot believe that John meant that God works according to a calendar and would not give his Spirit so long as Jesus was present in the flesh. Rather it would appear that the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus made such a profound impression on the disciples that with this groundwork laid, they became so responsive that the Spirit was free to work among them in enlightening power. Certainly something happened to them: the weak were made strong, the proud were made humble, the defiled were made clean, the rich were made compassionate.

The Spirit which the disciples felt working within and among them was not just a new enthusiasm for the right way of living, nor yet a new zeal generated by the fact that they were now responsible for carrying forward the work of their Master; it was God in characteristic action; God respecting the sacredness of each disciple's personality and yet enlightening his eyes and quickening his understanding and strengthening his will.

The reality of what they felt happening was so stupendous as to call forth a surprising wealth of metaphor. They talked of being "born of the Spirit," and of being alive once more after having been "dead in trespasses and sins," and of being "delivered from the powers of darkness" and "translated . . . into the kingdom of his [God's] dear Son." They felt themselves to be newly created. Light had followed darkness, order had succeeded chaos, power had replaced fumbling,

courage had banished fear. They were new men. In all of this, these early disciples felt that God had taken the initiative. They had at last learned how to co-operate; but they were still junior partners. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,"<sup>3</sup> wrote Paul, and again "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God . . . for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good work."<sup>4</sup>

In the light of their own experience, the one major concern of the apostles and their associates as they testified of Jesus was that those who heard should receive the Holy Spirit. This was the first question they asked of any new disciple.<sup>5</sup> It was the primary qualification of a man like Stephen.<sup>6</sup> It was the secret of their own success.<sup>7</sup> When Ananias and Sapphira lied to them, the horror of their sin centered in the fact that they had "agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord."<sup>8</sup> The early Christian church was the church of an inspired people. They were conscious of new moral power, and testified that love had been shed abroad in their hearts; and they showed this clearly in the love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and similar virtues manifest in their lives.<sup>9</sup>

The Apostle Paul is a convincing witness that it needed something more to make one a Christian than familiarity with the teachings of Jesus and an amiable desire to do good. These must be supplemented and directed and strengthened by the inner experience of the Spirit. Paul says that "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God";<sup>10</sup> and that "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty";<sup>11</sup> and that "the spirit helpeth our infirmities,"<sup>12</sup> so that it is through the Spirit that we "mortify the deeds of the body."<sup>13</sup> All these phrases might be said to be lifted out of Paul's autobiography, for they reflect the experience to which he referred when he wrote that "it pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me."<sup>14</sup> The "in" which Paul uses here is much more significant than "through" would have been. Paul was not merely the channel of revelation; he was himself the revelation.

The Spirit of God is God in action in the lives of responsive men. And since from the beginning it has been the purpose of Divinity to help men to grow in their own proper character, and without the bias or the weakness which might result from the undue influence of others, the Spirit leads and guides but never forces men into the way of truth. There is abundant evidence that Peter and Paul were both greatly blessed by the ministry of the Spirit, yet they were not infallible, and they sometimes differed sharply.<sup>15</sup> They and all their fellows grew gradually into power and understanding, and when they seemed to leap forward suddenly to some new height of wisdom or power, it was because there had been much silent preparation. There is an illustration of this in the story of the opening of the gospel to the Gentiles. Peter had already made his historic visit to Cornelius, and now he was explaining what he had done. After narrating how the Holy Spirit rested on Cornelius and members of his household, Peter continued: "Then remembered I the word of the Lord how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I that I could withstand God?"<sup>16</sup> The significant point in Peter's defense is that the promise of the Master to which he referred had been given many years before, and Peter's "remembrance" included twenty years' growth from the narrow intolerance of the times to the point where he could believe that the promise was to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. Throughout this period the Spirit had been working quietly in the life of Peter, and now he was a new man with broader vision and deeper sympathies than he ever had known before.

The creative activities of the Spirit of God give evidence that our Heavenly Father cares for man not only enough to bring him into being and then to die for him, but also enough to stay with him throughout his earthly experience, not obtrusively, but helpfully and even creatively. The restraint of Divinity is one of the most remarkable aspects of the divine nature. The Spirit of God, so construc-

tively operative at Pentecost and during the apostolic age, has been unable to function fully in the lives of men who persistently refuse to listen. And yet we cannot but believe that the changes wrought in the common and accepted human relationships, the extension of the spirit of brotherly kindness, the refinement of the sense of justice, the emergence of a public conscience in regard to economics, war, nationalism and such matters, and, most particularly, the development of the modern missionary movement, all indicate that God is still at work in the world. He is still seeking to guide men into all truth by the gentle influence of his Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> John 14:16, 26; 15:26; Acts 1:4-8. <sup>2</sup> John 7:39. <sup>3</sup> Philippians 1:6.  
<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 2:8, 10. <sup>5</sup> Acts 19:2. <sup>6</sup> Acts 6:5. <sup>7</sup> Acts 8:15. <sup>8</sup> Acts 5:9.  
<sup>9</sup> Galatians 5:22. <sup>10</sup> Romans 8:14. <sup>11</sup> II Corinthians 3:17. <sup>12</sup> Romans 8:26.  
<sup>13</sup> Romans 8:13. <sup>14</sup> Galatians 1:16. <sup>15</sup> Galatians 2:11. <sup>16</sup> Acts 11:16, 17.

## GOD CARES FOR US

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### GOD CARES FOR US

THERE IS ABUNDANT EVIDENCE THAT God cares for men, among the chief being that he lived among them in the person of his Son, and that he has so richly blessed prophets and martyrs and saints with the indwelling of his Spirit. But in the long run, no one can be content with a general assurance of the love of God for mankind. The question, therefore, becomes constantly more specific. Sooner or later we ask, "Can I honestly believe that God cares for me?"

There are approximately two billion people alive today, and the scoffer asks whether it is reasonable to believe that God is concerned about everyone of them. Strangely enough, the very fact that there are so many of us, and that we manage with as little confusion as we do, is an evidence that there is some directive agency which orders our way of life with regard to our individual differences. As Shakespeare said so long ago, "There is a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." The believer is disturbed by the fact that there is so much that is evil in the world, and the scoffer by the fact that there is so much good. But the scoffer has by far the more difficult explanation to make. It is inconceivable that two billion people, each one of them an extraordinarily complex personality, would have come as far as they have toward order and decency without some affectionate guidance.

There are those who recognize the hand of God in history, but who feel that the God of the universe cannot be bothered with persons of such small consequence as most of us are. They think that God presides over the general trend of human affairs, but that he is like a managing director who leaves details to lesser officials after he has approved the general plan of operations. They would like to think that they are personally important to Divinity, but the very

thought seems to be presumptuous. But let us think a moment. Does a good managing director leave personal contacts with employees to others because he is uninterested, or is it because he lacks ability to attend to everything and so has to choose between desirable alternatives? If he were both good enough and able enough, can we not be sure that he would maintain close contact with every man in the plant? God, we believe, is strong just where we are weak; and it is certainly not unreasonable to believe that he who created the universe can keep in touch with its parts, and especially with those persons for whose benefit so much work has been done.

Right down the generations God has been busy breaking down the barriers which have divided men; and as each barrier has been demolished, another section of humanity has been enfranchised. This was one of the special missions of the prophets of Israel. Hosea, for example, out of his own love for his unfaithful wife, helped Israel to grasp the redeeming truth that God would not give them up even though they had been unfaithful, and that he would use every means in his power to win them back again.<sup>1</sup> Through Hosea God has enfranchised every sinner who can be won back through love. A few years after the time of Hosea the national hopes of Israel were extinguished by the Captivity. The impact of this tragedy was especially heartbreaking, because the Hebrew people thought of God as the God of the nation rather than the God of the individuals composing the nation; they felt that the sins of their fathers had condemned them to exile. In this time of darkness, and out of his own heartbreak, Jeremiah became the messenger of the Lord to assure them of their individual importance in God's sight. Through Jeremiah God has enfranchised the worthy citizens of all outcast nations.<sup>2</sup> So, also Micah was used to open the doors of opportunity to the poor;<sup>3</sup> and Jonah was used to open them to the enemy Gentiles;<sup>4</sup> but it was not until Jesus showed us how all-encompassing is the love of the Father that every man had reason to feel fully at home with God.

Jesus spoke constantly of "my father" and "your father," seeking by the use of this word to impress on his followers the great truth that God is concerned about everyone of his children. He told



them that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground unnoticed, and that the very hairs of our heads are numbered. Surely one who knows us so intimately and who recalls us so tenderly will not give us stones when we ask for bread, nor serpents when we ask for fish.<sup>5</sup> In the parable of the prodigal son it was the love of the father which brought the son back home again, just as in the parable of the lost sheep, it was the shepherd who went out to seek the one that was lost.

It is hard to take with sober seriousness the teaching of Jesus that God is indeed our Father; yet every teaching of the Master and his life and his death sought to carry this truth home to the hearts of men. Let us suppose for a moment that we were members of the same family as Milton, Pasteur, Da Vinci, Lincoln, Edison, Clara Barton, or some other person of distinction. While the difference of ability would remain and be recognized would not each of us have the same access to the hearts and resources of our parents? And if this is true, does not the thought carry conviction that we are indeed as close to the heart of our Heavenly Father as anyone could possibly be—that we are as dear to him as our brothers, even they are as dear as we are. This includes even rebellious children, for Jesus taught:

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?”<sup>6</sup>

The plea which our Heavenly Father is always making for our love is addressed to us individually as well as collectively. Dr. E. Stanley Jones says that one of the turning points in his life came when a friend knelt down beside him as he prayed and whispered: “God so loved Stanley Jones that he gave his only begotten Son, that when Stanley Jones believeth in him, Stanley Jones shall not perish but have everlasting life.”<sup>7</sup>

The appeal of Calvary is couched in the language of sacrifice and of pain just because it is a language that is spoken by all mankind; and the weakest and the lowest can understand it even as the strongest and the highest. Because the appeal of the Cross reaches beneath all our superficial differences, down to the hearts of men, it has become the most poignant indication of the love of God for each and all of us. The unflinching devotion here manifest has won all sorts and conditions of men—the rich and the poor, the wise and the foolish, the learned and the illiterate, the prominent and the obscure. All who will take time to look and to listen find God here searching after them. Listen to what Calvary meant to the headstrong Peter:

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who, his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”<sup>8</sup>

We who have been too blind to realize our true condition are being sought out by the God who loves us and who now offers us the priceless gift of salvation. This gift is not something distinct from ourselves, but is a new quality of selfhood. We can be new men in Christ Jesus. Neither the guarantee of happiness nor the freedom from penalty is the essence of salvation but only this indwelling of the divine nature. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”<sup>9</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, his free and kindly and redeeming favor, is extended to every man.

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<sup>1</sup> Hosea 11: 1-3, 8, 9. <sup>2</sup> Jeremiah 31: 29-34. <sup>3</sup> Micah 2: 1; 6: 6-8. <sup>4</sup> Jonah 4: 10, 11. <sup>5</sup> Matthew 7: 10, 11. <sup>6</sup> Matthew 5: 44-47. <sup>7</sup> John 3: 16 in *Victorious Living*. <sup>8</sup> I Peter 2: 21-25. <sup>9</sup> Revelation 22: 17.

## GOD CARES FOR US

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### HOW CAN WE BE CERTAIN?

TO LIVE HAPPILY AND SUCCESSFULLY, men and women, as well as children, must have a sense of security. During these difficult days, this truth is painfully apparent. People who had taken it for granted that their food and clothing and shelter were safe and certain have been appalled to find this security evaporated. Others who confidently planned the trend of their lives have been rudely uprooted and forced to fit into situations that are both strange and repulsive to them. If such people have no underlying certainties by which to anchor their souls, life has become tragic indeed; they feel unsafe, adrift, beset by fears.

While security in temporal things is important, security in spiritual things is even more essential. It is the foundation of all stable progress. Jesus possessed this certainty, and drew poise and confidence and power from it. Out of this certainty he said to the woman at the well, "We know what we worship." Our Heavenly Father wants us to have a similar certainty. A story is told of an old farm laborer, who, talking to a stranger, told him that for many years he had walked several miles to and from his work. "Why did you not move nearer your job?" asked the stranger. "Well, you see," responded the laborer, "I was never really sure whether it would be a permanent job or not." A similar attitude of mind is too often found in professed disciples of Jesus who are not quite sure enough to close in, to commit themselves, to make the practice of Christianity a permanent job.

If it is at all possible, we make our investments on the basis of certainties. We may gamble on uncertainties; but we invest in securities which are sound and on which we can count. Certainty is more important in matters of religion than in any other field, because

the issues at stake are more far reaching. To make a mistake in counting money or in measuring crops may involve great loss. To make a mistake in steering a ship or in building a bridge may invite catastrophe. To mistake error for truth in science may breed chaos. But to live and die in blind disregard of the spiritual truth is to sustain a loss which is irreparable.

Certitude in things spiritual was a major factor in the ministry of the apostles. They lived by the light of the words of Jesus, who said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." So in time Paul's testimony was placed beside that of his Master: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."<sup>1</sup> John, too, shared this certainty. His testimony is, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."<sup>2</sup> By reason of their confident assurance, such men as these turned the world upside down, shaking those things which were insecure until the rottenness of their foundations was apparent to all; but they could only do this because they had had confirming and stabilizing experience with God.

The men of the apostolic age were "compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses," yet their assurance of the truth was not borrowed from others. It was won in action. We can win the same certainty in the same way. What we do is even more important in this connection than what we think. Thought may help to remove some of the barriers to confidence, but in the long run it is living for God which brings us the assurance of his active and unfailing good will. We can always test God by doing what he is most likely to approve—by acting generously, by building honestly, by sharing willingly, but forgiving truly. The testimonies of godly men are unanimous at this point; whenever we thus put God to the test he meets us and joins us in the enterprise.

As we seek to do the will of God, we find that experience confirms our active faith along certain well-defined lines. First we note the assurance of the Spirit which has already been mentioned. Paul was

discussing something which the Roman saints well understood when he wrote to them:

"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."<sup>3</sup>

Wicked men know nothing of this. Scientific men, in their capacity as scientists, know nothing of it; but the saints do; and their testimonies cannot be successfully impeached. Men of God come to know the Spirit and to be enveloped in it and to be regenerated by it.

In the second place, we attain certainty in spiritual things through the power which sustains us as we do the will of God. The sign of power is that things happen. Marvelous things happen when men really go into active partnership with Divinity. The sick are healed, the weak are made strong, the underprivileged become leaders; a dozen men start a crusade which goes around the world and down the ages; a Luther defies the might of Rome, a Wesley saves England from revolution. But more fundamentally characteristic than any of these is the fact that by the power of God sinners are made whole, and men long bound with the chains of habit become free again.

Perhaps the most soul-satisfying certainty which comes to men in the service of God is the certainty of divine forgiveness. As Stanley Jones says: "The first Christian to enter Paradise was not Peter nor James but a young brigand; the forerunner of the crooked made straight." Jesus himself tells us that, "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."<sup>4</sup> And every truly repentant sinner has shared that joy. Their triumphant testimony is that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the unbeliever may think about the reality of divine for-

givenness, no impartial observer can deny the power which is unleashed by the sense of forgiveness in the soul of an earnest man. God does not condone sin in anyone. On the contrary, because he loves us he suffers in our sinning. But he never holds past sinning against a man who truly desires to make a fresh start; instead he stands by such a man as a friend. When anyone feels this in his soul it brings a new zest for life which has never been duplicated elsewhere. This problem of getting off to a fresh start after a life of dismal failure is one of the great problems of life and therefore of literature. But nowhere in all literature is there any parallel to what happens daily in the lives of men and women who take seriously the offer of divine forgiveness and then start out anew. The child who is welcomed back to the family circle, after his own actions had seemed to exclude him, but who comes back knowing what his sin cost those he loves, is more eager to justify the mercy extended to him and to prove his right to a place in the inner circle of affection by living worthy of that place. So, also, the once wicked man who is welcomed back to his father's home, and who finds there a place where he is welcomed and where he can serve, is driven toward excellence by a passion of gratitude which stirs him to the depths. Let no one try to tell such a man there is no God.

In religion, as in the other phases of life, we win assurance only by living out our faith. Our conviction that the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the gospel are to be relied upon rests ultimately on the fact that we have found the past promises of God to be true in every detail. These promises are to all men who hear and obey. They are to rich and poor, black and white, high and low. They are to you, and they are to me. They are the promises of God who created the universe, and all the powers of the universe are behind them.

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<sup>1</sup> II Timothy 1: 12. <sup>2</sup> I John 3: 14. <sup>3</sup> Romans 8: 13-16; see also I John 3: 24.  
<sup>4</sup> Luke 15: 7. <sup>5</sup> Romans 5: 20.

# GOD CARES FOR US

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## WHY GOD HIDES HIMSELF

IT IS RELATED THAT IN GREETING a newly appointed minister, Thomas Carlyle said to him, "What this parish needs most is a preacher who knows God otherwise than by hearsay." Emerson had much the same thing in mind when he advised his students to seek first-hand acquaintance with God. But one of the difficulties which besets some of us as we seek this vivid awareness of Divinity is a sense of unreality. We feel that it is difficult to come to grips with the fact of God, and we have more than a little sympathy for Job who cried out:

"Oh that I knew where I might find him! That I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me . . . Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him."<sup>1</sup>

Yet the very fact that God is invisible is its own lesson for faith. The tangible things all about us refuse to be ignored. They crowd on our sight every time we turn around, or remind us sharply of their presence when we bump into them without looking where we are going. There is nothing surprising or miraculous about this, because that is what we mean when we call things tangible—we mean that they can be seen and touched and weighed. How subtle, in comparison with these things, is the impact of Divinity. Many people go through life without ever feeling that they have "bumped into" God; and yet there is universal testimony that God exists. Some of the best and wisest people of history have been convinced that God is,

that he loves us, and that he is seeking to make himself known to us. One of the greatest thinkers the world has ever known was Benedict Spinoza, the "God-intoxicated Jew." Spinoza tells us that by entering deeply into his experience as a student, by catching himself in the act of thinking, he became directly conscious of the pressure of God on his thoughts, and so found God active in his studies. Do not such testimonies as these, plus the many testimonies of plain men, combine to bring strong evidence that God truly is? .

In view of what faith has meant in the lives of men of renown, to ridicule its existence and power is to refuse to face reality. The man who claims that he does not believe anything that he cannot see is talking plain nonsense. In daily life we are constantly walking by faith, and not by sight. It is the very nature of power to be veiled, and to be known only through its manifestations. Who ever saw electricity? Who ever saw the force of gravity? Who ever saw the waves of influence which radiate from one person to another? We walk by faith and not by sight, and common sense should tell us that it is just as reasonable to live by faith in an invisible God as it is to live by faith in invisible life forces.

Strange as it may at first appear, commerce with invisible persons is not confined to our contacts with Divinity. Every real friendship involves communion with an unseen person. The body of this unseen person is like the outer garments which he wears. His true self is hidden, and he can only be known really through his actions. And again, true understanding comes only with love. How often have we heard someone remark, "I cannot understand what John sees in that fellow," and how truly this represents the facts! He cannot understand what John sees, because he does not care as John cares.

But there is more revealing power in true friendship than that. In such friendship we give all we can express, and receive in return all that we can assimilate. If my friend is more wise than I am, this sharing involves definite effort toward understanding on my part and delicate and inoffensive acts of self-disclosure on his. We try to meet on a high plane of understanding, yet I must struggle to reach him, and he must be kind and must not injure my self-respect. Does not



such an exchange involve powers of the soul which are never visible except in action? And is this not true with every sceptic who loves his wife just as it is with every mystic who loves his God?

The question nevertheless persists: Why does God hide himself from us? Our situation reminds me of early dawn on any summer day. Darkness has reigned a few moments before, but now it is in headlong retreat. Light comes streaming through the clouds. The song of birds fills the air. All around is a new feeling of life and warmth and motion. But still the sun lingers. We know that it is there, but we cannot yet see its full splendor and glory. So it is with the revelation of God. The business of disclosing himself to us has to be performed with the utmost delicacy. Our Heavenly Father must not only make himself known so that we shall be able to trust him and co-operate with him, but he must also keep himself hidden so that we shall not be overpowered by his glory. If we were to come suddenly into the full light of his presence, we would be like the pit ponies, who are so used to the darkness of the mines where they work that they sometimes go blind when they are brought carelessly into the full light of day.

This veiled quality of Divinity seems to be necessary to our spiritual training. To see anyone frequently and without effort may easily breed familiarity, and familiarity tends often to breed contempt. Common men who were acquainted with Jesus were blinded by the very fact that they thought they knew him. They could not discern the Son of God in the man Jesus. For men who were willing to pay the price of understanding, men who really wanted to know and follow the truth, this was no lasting deterrent. Peter and John and Paul and a host of others were made into new men by the truth which they found in Jesus. But even this truth had to be disclosed gradually.

If God should appear before us in the full splendor of his power, his greatness would overwhelm us as the waves overwhelm a landsman on his first visit to the seaside; but that is not all. If he were thus to reveal himself fully, the revelation would rob us of something of our right to choose our way of life. Knowing God, to do his

will would be so obviously sensible that we would do it without thought and without strain and so without growth. We would be like the children of a rich and generous but overpowering father, greatly blessed in everything excepting only the real freedom to choose and to grow into maturity through living by the choices we make.

It is good for us to learn to walk by faith and not always by sight. Faith has its evidences, as we shall see, and as all the saints testify. But these evidences are not tangible and mathematical. They are spiritual, as evidences in the spiritual realm ought to be. "All kingdoms have a law given,"<sup>2</sup> and the primary law of the spiritual realm is that men of God share a certainty which wicked or even indifferent men can never share. Paul and Barnabas and Augustine and Tyndal and George Fox and John Bunyan and John Wesley and Joseph Smith and a host of others have known this certainty from experience. It is just because this certainty is reserved for good men, and is not shared with merely clever men, that goodness is especially precious. If men could see God with their physical eyes, or with the eyes of the mind, instead of with the eyes of the soul only, then they would choose these easier ways to understanding; and goodness would be even more neglected than it is now.

Science has its field, the field of observation and weighing and measuring and deduction. Science has its certainties, that is, those which are available in the scientific field. Faith has its field, too—the field of goodness and of moral adventure and of spiritual power. Faith has full right to those convictions regarding the reality of the unseen which grow in the hearts and minds of good men at their best, and which are confirmed in the hearts and lives of good men everywhere. The good man is not dismayed at finding himself in a world where the evidence for God challenges him only as he is worthy to be challenged. He prefers it that way. If the sight of his eyes compelled him to believe, he would not be truly free. When belief is the verdict of the soul, then he is free indeed.

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1 Job 23: 3-5, 8, 9. 2 *Doctrine and Covenants* 85: 9.

## WHY GOD MADE US AS WE ARE

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### WHY GOD MADE US AS WE ARE

MANY years ago the shepherd king of Israel looked up at the Eastern stars and sang, in the spirit of profound reverence and worship: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."<sup>1</sup> What lifted David into an ecstasy of worship was not the greatness of the moon and the stars, but the greatness of God who made them and who was yet so mindful of man as to visit him and crown him with glory and honor and dominion.

In the spirit of worship similar to that which moved David long ago we ask again, "What is man?" Our age has a great deal to say in answer—more, perhaps, than any other age. Of all the things that might be said, we note only five, but these five are of major importance, and they seem to be irrefutable.

In the first place, all the various groups into which men are divided are related to each other. There has been much discussion among scientific men regarding the origin of the human race, but at present the scientific argument strongly favors the idea that there was an original "cradle-land" from which the earth was peopled by migration. This, of course, is the affirmation of the Book of Genesis and is cited by the Apostle Paul as a reason for our fellowship one with another. Certainly there are no "pure" races. The Russians, the English, the Germans, and the French all have multiple origins, and the mixture is still going forward. The United States has been called the "melting pot" of humanity but it is not the only such melting pot. Many of us think of the races of mankind as divided into a few distinct

color groups, but as a matter of fact there are many color groups and many of these merge into each other. It is hard to say where white ends and brown begins or where yellow merges into red. An authority in this field, Dr. Pritchard, has reported that "The innumerable varieties of mankind run into one another by insensible degrees." Moreover, there is no conclusive scientific evidence that any race is innately superior to any other; indeed the evidence seems to point the other way. It is true, of course, that some races have been restricted by their geographical isolation from the rest of the world. Of this China is an example. Others have been retarded by the inertia which accompanies life in tropical countries, such as equatorial Africa. But the evidence to date indicates strongly that, if they are given time and opportunity, then men of any race and country can share the culture and absorb the qualities of any other race with which they come into contact. Thus, we Anglo-Saxons are gradually coming to appreciate the civilization of China, Egypt, and India, all of which are older than our own; and some of us are very proud of our ability to appreciate Chinese vases and embroidery and pictures, and Egyptian temples and statuary, and Indian poetry and philosophy.

In the second place, men are vastly different from each other, yet these differences make mutual aid both possible and desirable. No one of us thinks that if he had the power to choose his place in life he would choose to be exactly who he is. Yet it is amazing how difficult we should find it to select our own place in life, and to be content with our own selection. Some would want to be taller. Some would want to be richer. Still others would want to be more brilliant, and yet others would crave social gifts. Every person is tied to his past and to his present, to his forebears and to his associates, by so many strings that any sudden readjustment of a fundamental character would bring chaos. We need to be different, but we need to achieve these differences gradually and in relation to our fellows. As a matter of fact this is the best way that we can make our adjustments, and it is well for us that we cannot jump from one type of personality to another.

Men are so related to each other that any man of good will can

fit helpfully into the total situation. One will bring enthusiasm with which to go forward. Another will bring caution and a stabilizing influence. A third will help to acquire the special knowledges which are behind all true progress. A man who has in him the elements of greatness will see things in their larger perspective, and give himself to great causes. Neither his vision nor his leadership will be effective unless he can find other men, many of them, who can be made to share his vision and to follow his leadership. Even the rebels have their place, because they rescue us from complacency and are so frequently the pioneers of a better order.

Again, mankind is on the march. We are endowed with ambition, imagination, and will power. We will always be tantalized by dreams of something better than we have yet known, and this divine discontent continues until we respond to it by standing up and marching forward. It would be a most disheartening experience to reflect on the comparative impermanence of life were it not that something whispers incessantly to us that what seems to be is not so. Truly we have no permanent abiding place here, but the man of faith is convinced that life on earth is a significant phase in his march toward the eternities. We are men of destiny; and as we grow here in knowledge and insight so shall it please God, who is our Father, to endow us with wealth beyond the dreams of little men, and with powers which could not be trusted in the hands of men only as they become great because they are also good.

Nothing can be altered that is already in the past, and very little that is in the present; but the future is ours and capable of raising life's intensity to its highest pitch. The trouble is that too often we are the slaves of facts, when we could just as easily rule these facts and use them creatively, if we would be true to our ideals. Our hope lies in our endowment of imagination and intelligence and moral capacity, and in the fact that our visions disturb us, and also in the leadership of those of our own number who have responded to their ideals.

The greatest thing about man is this capacity for moral choice which has just been mentioned. Compared to this even his ability

to talk and to use tools and to anticipate the future are of secondary importance. This capacity for moral choice is the greatest distinction between man and the lesser animals. We are creatures of impulse, yet we never feel entirely free to follow our impulses. There is a point where our ideals step in and assert their right to take command; and although we can refuse to listen to the voice of conscience we know in our souls that we do this at our peril. When conscience is at work, it has been said that our "whole self" is speaking to our "little self." We look down on our lesser self from the watchtower of our greater self and approve it or disapprove it, in the light of an ideal which sweeps far on ahead of anything the finite, fragmentary self has ever experienced.

As has long been recognized, conscience is a creature of education. If it is neglected, it withers away; if it is misused, it develops meaningless hindrances to a full and happy life; but when rightfully cultivated, it turns from mere restraint and grows into a positive creative force. From behavior which has been stern and dutiful, it then leads us to behavior which is warm and loving and which is yet right. "The Spirit of man is the candle of the Lord."<sup>2</sup>

Yet again man is lost without God. We are so accustomed to receiving the gifts of God that we take them for granted. Yet all the major joys of life are shared, and God is behind the sharing. Think, for example, of the joys of nature. We appreciate these, but we do not create them. The beauty of the autumn woods, the quiet solemnity of the starry night, the keen, cold exhilaration of the air after rain, the delicate gauzy wings of a dragonfly, the infinitely lovable appeal of all young things, of babies and puppies and kittens and chickens; these and a thousand other gifts of God are free to any man who has eyes to see and a heart to wonder and a soul to give thanks. The tragedy of life is that the great gifts of God are so frequently misused. Somewhere back along the stream of time there has occurred a dislocation of the fine intimacy of fellowship which was designed to obtain between us and our Heavenly Father, and ever since that time we have been groping in the dark. This is not just a theory. It is a stern and significant reality.

Many people have been greatly shocked by the revelation of man's inhumanity which has involved us in two world conflicts before we have reached the half-way mark in the present century. But we ought not be shocked. Christianity has always answered the question, "What is man?" by answering, "He is a sinner." Of late years we have been beguiled by hopes which had their origin in humanism and the scientific movement but which had no justification in human nature or in facts known to men of God. Since we are sinners, which is to say that we are in the habit of trying to run our lives apart from God, we are wise if we face the fact and try to break the habit. Behind the fact of our sinfulness lies an even more significant fact. We could not be sinners if we were not free. That is why we can sin; but it is also why there is hope that someday we shall have the good sense and the self-control to do what is right because it is right, and because we love God, and because we have responded to the divine search after us. Then shall we be free indeed.

This, then, is the kind of people that we are. We are related to each other. We need each other. We are on the march. We are distinguished by our capacity for moral choice. And we are lost without God. Surely something is being wrought out of human nature in the rough which explains and justifies life as we know it. Why are we made as we are, endowed as we are, spurred on as we are? Is it not that only persons so endowed, so intimately related to each other, and so dependent on God can ever emerge into a full life which is characterized by freedom and by fellowship and by communion? The most precious things we possess are possessed in common. Rich and poor, good and bad, ignorant and learned, attractive and repulsive—people are all people. Fundamentally we are akin, and fundamentally we are the children of God. It was this that Jesus lived and died to make clear. As Paul wrote:

"Now in Christ Jesus ye who were sometimes far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 8: 3-7. <sup>2</sup> Proverbs 20: 27. <sup>3</sup> Ephesians 2: 13-19.

# GOD IN THE SHADOWS

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## WHAT OF EVIL?

THE PURPOSES OF BOTH GOD AND MAN are persistently thwarted by evil in one guise or another, until we sometimes find ourselves hesitating to say, "I believe in God, the Father, Almighty." In view of our determination to examine our faith in the light of facts of life as we know them, we must therefore consider this hesitancy, to see whether it is justified or not. Our problem is usually stated something like this: "If all creation is ultimately traceable to divinity, is not God responsible for the evil which is in the world? Or, if God is not responsible for it, how did evil get into the world?"

To begin, let us note some of the major types of evil with which we are confronted: there are natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, tornadoes, and floods; then there are cruelties in subhuman life, the struggle for survival which made Tennyson describe nature as "red in tooth and claw"; next come the physical and mental ills of mankind; these in turn are augmented by moral evils like hatred and envy and immorality; and to these must be added such social evils as war and race prejudice and power politics. \*

The internal relationships of the universe are so wonderfully adjusted that we do not do justice to the facts if we consider natural calamities out of relation to this background of near perfection. Mountains seem so high and seas so deep, that we tend to forget that if the world were reduced to the size of a basketball these heights and depths would hardly be discernible. So, also, disturbances within the natural order which appear to us to be world-shaking, are comparatively unimportant. Earthquakes affect only a small portion of the earth's surface; tidal waves reach only a small part of the coastal areas; the paths cut by tornadoes could not be seen if they were marked in scale on any ordinary globe.

In the second place, we know so little about the function of these



natural events that we are hardly justified in regarding them as catastrophes from the point of view of the natural order. They may all be safety devices or compensating movements necessary to maintain the equilibrium of the universe as a whole, just as decay is necessary to prevent the world's becoming filled with dead organic matter. What seriously disturbs us is not these events, but the disastrous effects which some of them have on human life. They may well be good in themselves, when viewed from the vantage point of the natural order, but they become calamities when they kill and maim men. Some of these disasters are tragically unavoidable, and whether they can be justified depends on whether there is behind them a total purpose which dwarfs the losses entailed, in much the same way as the triumph of right justifies the death of the martyrs. But many other disasters are by no means unavoidable. Should we blame God because a town built at the foot of a volcano is wiped out when the volcano goes into eruption? Do not the greed and indolence of men play their part here?

Many of the accidents which shock us so deeply are related to what has already been said. I remember my own dismay at the loss of the "Titanic"; but even so long ago I found it difficult to understand those who blamed God for what had happened. Did God ordain that the "Titanic" should push ahead so fast in ice-infested waters? And conversely, if our Heavenly Father should remove all icebergs from the track of racing ocean liners what end would there be to human selfishness and folly?

Responsibility in many industrial accidents must rest with men rather than with God. These accidents have their origin in carelessness, ignorance, greed for gain, and similar human defects. Many other such accidents are the price paid for our growing understanding, and serve to underscore difficulties which must be overcome if we are to make progress safely. Tragic as they are, their worst aspects can be remedied through care, sympathy, and co-operation. They are of the same character as the losses incurred in the advance of science; and no thoughtful man wishes to make all scientific research so safe that it loses its appeal for heroes.

Of the suffering of animals we cannot say much, since it is impossible for us to see the problem from their point of view. But we have some fairly clear hints as to the facts. It is highly improbable, for instance, that their suffering is such a problem to animals as it is to us. So far as we know, they have no fearful anticipations of what might happen to them, and few memories of what has gone before. Nor are their bodies so finely sensitized to pain as ours are. Nor, again, is nature as "red in tooth and claw" as Tennyson seemed to imply. The studies of Prince Kropotkin and others have gone far to dispel this illusion and to indicate that for the most part animals are happy and co-operative and carefree. And, again, it may be that there is a balance in nature which necessarily involves some suffering at this stage of its development. This possibility was illustrated in England where many people killed their pets rather than have them face suffering through air raids; later on pests and vermin increased at an alarming rate; and people realized that it would have been better to keep the pets alive and available to serve their natural purpose. Yet when all the limitations of evil in the animal world are taken into account, there is still much left to acknowledge and to seek to alleviate. We do not know why animals suffer as they do in times of drought, for example, except that obviously it is impossible to adjust the climate so as to meet all their needs. But we do know that there are many ways in which we can alleviate such ills if we will regard the needs of the animal kingdom as part of our civic responsibility. This is exactly what Christianity teaches us to do; and as a result of this teaching, much has been done already.

The physical and mental disorders which beset men stem from a multiplicity of sources; and we have not yet traced enough of these to make inclusive generalizations with any degree of authority. It is nevertheless quite clear that the element of human responsibility is very great. Gluttony, intemperance, unwisdom, uncleanness, suspicion, anxiety, anger, and pride are obviously contributing factors in many of our major physical and mental crises. And even though it is not suggested that the elimination of these fundamentally spiritual defects will immediately banish sickness of all kinds, it will be

agreed readily that this is a point of constructive attack for those of us who are seriously concerned about the problem of evil on the physical and mental plane.

Even more disturbing to serious-minded persons than any of the foregoing is the moral evil which is apparent all around us, and which ultimately arises from the abuse of the free moral agency which God has given us in order that we might become like him. There is a sense in which God is responsible for this moral evil, since he gave us our freedom. But this is only technically true; for even God could not make real men unless he left them free. There can be no development of character without responsibility; and there can be no responsibility without freedom to act. Moreover, our Heavenly Father has done much more than give us our freedom. He has tempted us upward from the beginning of time; and has endured for our sakes, in the eternal realm, the pain which became apparent to all men on Calvary.

It is on this moral plane that life's greatest tragedies occur, for it is on this plane that men may and do commit treason against their own best possibilities. Violent death may be disturbing, but it is not necessarily tragic. Riotous living can be much more tragic. If he had not "come to himself," the life story of the prodigal son would have ended on just such a tragic note, even though he had died in his bed. The story of Macbeth is tragic not just because he and his wife died miserable deaths, but because Macbeth put his trust in the forces of evil, and they turned against him and betrayed him.

Evil as are lust and avarice and cruelty and similar personal sins, these tend to multiply themselves indefinitely when let loose in the social order. Yet graft and injustice and race discrimination and aggressive imperialism are all ultimately personal. They have their roots in the abuse of freedom; and they are nourished by pride and greed and unbrotherliness. These social evils are not divinely willed. They are not even necessary stages on the way to man's destination. They are plague spots in which men waste their substance and lose their strength and find only forgetfulness.

Christianity does not deny or explain evil, but Christianity does

constantly defeat evil. Because God is free, and because the range of his understanding is so much broader than ours, we must expect him to intervene at times, so as to combat the evil which would otherwise ride rampant through the earth. But he does not combat evil through intervention only; he sometimes uses it. He cannot approve illegitimacy, but he can and does use such a man as Alexander Hamilton. He can never condone murder; but when wicked men murdered his Son, God used their wickedness as the background against which he demonstrated his love. He cannot tolerate corruption in the social order; but he can use such corruption to illustrate the meaning of individual sinning and so to win the sinner to righteousness. He cannot love war; but he can and does use war to stimulate discoveries in surgery and aviation and education and production, and to test the caliber of men and awaken their spiritual perception.

We do not become aware of the ugliness of imperfection until we have seen something of real beauty, nor do we sense the blank intensity of darkness unless we have first walked in the light. In the same way, we cannot be alive to the true horror of moral evil until we have seen something of moral perfection. Our Heavenly Father therefore carries on unremitting warfare with evil by sharing with us visions of the beauty of righteousness. We never see sin so truly as after an hour with God.

The power by which God works in overcoming the evil in mankind is the power of love; and love is the greatest power in the universe. Love cannot only change the hearts and intentions of men, but it can also make itself a means to victory. It is this peculiar ability to use evil for its own ends which makes love paramount; and this ability rests on the willingness of love to make sacrifices. Nothing else can rival love in this field. Earthquakes, accidents, physical disabilities, moral calamities, tragedy in all its forms—all provide fields of operation for men who love enough to make sacrifices; and sacrifices made in the name of love illuminate the beauty of righteousness, enhancing its loveliness as a well-placed light increases the beauty of a fine picture. Terrible as evil is, it therefore has this one thing to commend it—that it yields to treatment by God and by godly men through sacrifice.

## GOD IN THE SHADOWS

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### WHAT OF PAIN AND SORROW?

ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES to faith comes from pain and sorrow. These somber twins touch the life of every man, sparing neither young nor old, high nor low. With all our vaunted progress, we have devised no means of excluding them. Banished from society by one door, we find them creeping back by another. Neither wealth, nor power, nor great knowledge, nor high station can secure us from their attack. There are reasons for believing that the finest persons we know, or that history has ever known, have been most intimately acquainted with them. They are as busy today and as subtle in their approach as ever they have been. One of the lessons which history has to teach us is that no faith can long survive which does not meet their challenge; and certainly that challenge is direct and strong now.

All of us were born in pain, and this intimate association of pain and birth continues throughout life and throughout all phases of life. There is no great art, no great literature, no great music, no great science, unless pain and sorrow are present at their nativity. Biographies of the pioneers in these fields are not stories of men and women who found life easy, but rather of men and women who loved beauty and truth and who sought after them even though pain and sorrow often stood across the path. Milton was blind, Bunyan wrote from prison, Frances Thompson knew what it was to go hungry. This intimate association of pain and birth is also apparent in the field of moral achievement. The ideals of justice and liberty and honor which the best of men cherish most dearly were not first written in ink, but in blood; and they have been copied and corrected over and over again, and every page of the record is stained with blood and tears.

In the spiritual realm this intimacy is even more clearly evident. There is no redemption without the shedding of blood;<sup>1</sup> but, on the contrary, our greatest spiritual advances have been won out of pain and suffering. David did not write his Shepherd's Psalm while he tended his father's sheep as a boy, but after Absalom, his dear son, had died in rebellion and in sin. Hosea did not come to understand God's love for the erring through quiet meditation under the date palms of his native land, but out of the heartbreak caused by his young wife's infidelity. There is a sense in which both Old and New Testament writings are but a setting forth of the cost of knowing and explaining the great truths of God, and the glory of these writings is reached in the story of a lonely man nailed to a cross outside the Holy City.

Comfort and ease are among the most insidious enemies of achievement. A certain amount of tension seems to be a necessary part of constructive living. It is as though character were a fabric on a loom, the weaving of which can only be accomplished as thousands of threads are kept tightly stretched, and yet not so tight as to break them. No fabric is worth using if tension is not maintained while it is being woven. Out of the opposition of its parts comes beautiful co-operation through the whole; and so we have a universe which is vitalized by the very tensions that threaten to destroy it. Dr. L. P. Jacks, who uses this parallel very effectively,<sup>2</sup> probably borrowed his idea from the philosopher, Immanuel Kant, who says that "man longs to live in comfort and pleasure, but Nature, who knows better what he was made for, gives him toil and painful strife, so that he may raise himself above the sphere of his sorrows."

We do not know why pain and sorrow are a necessary part of existence; but only that there is no great living without them. "It must needs be that there is an opposition in all things."<sup>3</sup> The only time of which we have any record when there was no pain on the earth was when the earth was without form and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep. That was before there was any life on the earth at all. If there were no color but green, we would not be conscious of

any color at all. If there were no sound but the undeviating roar of Niagara, we would not recognize its thunder as sound. In a world where there was no possibility of pain and sorrow there would be no possibility of pleasure and happiness. No one knows what love is until he can be hurt in the person of another.

Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." How this must have startled the disciples, who had not yet recovered from being told that "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."<sup>4</sup> Almost the last persons we should naturally single out as blessed are those who mourn. But Jesus saw that life at its best includes capacity for deep feeling, and therefore for sorrow. Those who mourn are at least alive. With this in mind Sir Henry Taylor wrote:

"He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend.  
Eternity mourns that. 'Tis an ill cure  
For life's worst ills, to have no time to feel them.  
Where sorrow's held intrusive and turn'd out  
There wisdom will not enter, nor true power,  
Nor aught that dignifies humanity."

There have been many attempts to explain pain and sorrow. Among the most persistent of these is the suggestion that they come as judgments on wrongdoing. But while the explanation has some truth, it will not stand up under scrutiny. Pain and sorrow are often the direct results of human ignorance and stupidity and laziness; but there is no balanced proportion about the way in which they are meted out, and sometimes the least culpable are the worst sufferers. The theory that pain is a judgment will not hold up in the presence of suffering children. Nor can we agree that sorrow over the passing of a loved one is punishment for sin.

Another tentative explanation of pain and sorrow is that they improve the character of the sufferer. Again there is an element of truth here; but while some are uplifted and ennobled by pain and sorrow there are many others who are degraded and embittered by the influence of suffering. Pain and sorrow are vital to character, since

great character is never achieved except in triumph over them; but few people understand this truth and still fewer live by its light. Our Roman Catholic friends come near to greatness when they "offer up" their sufferings, by which they mean that they submit to the ills of life which cannot be avoided, and do so with patience and humility, and with confidence that suffering has a meaning and a purpose which we shall in time come to understand.

We shall be helped if we see how frequently pain is a danger signal, and that it can therefore minister to life. The most dangerous diseases are those which give no warning through pain. On the other hand pain may force us to take care of an infected tooth, and disease may insist that we shall clean up an unsanitary tenement district, and war may at last require us to order life on a more fair and honest and equitable basis.

Jesus did not give his followers a logical explanation of the necessity for pain, but he did something infinitely more important than that for them. He shared their pain, and in so doing showed that its ill effects can be overcome and can even be made to minister to our growth. The last word of the Christian faith is not concerned with the sufferings of Calvary, but with the triumph of Easter. Jesus won that triumph by facing the worst that life could do to him, and by showing himself "more than conqueror" through the quality of his faith.

We cannot avoid all pain and suffering. Indeed, we should not attempt to avoid such pain and suffering as belong with sympathy and understanding. But if we bear unavoidable ills in the Spirit of Jesus, they actually do become a means of life and power. The Crucifixion of Jesus was a device of wicked men, resorted to in order to kill the Master's life work. Yet because of the spirit in which Jesus endured the Cross, he has spoken with authority from that Cross to the hearts of men from that time to the present. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned to death, but before he died, he shared the exalted joy of martyrdom.<sup>5</sup> Beethoven, lover and creator of great music, became deaf quite early in life but steadily refused to be thwarted by this handicap, and one of his biographers says of him: "We are eternal



debtors to his deafness. It is doubtful if such lofty music could have been created except as self-compensation for some affliction, and in the utter isolation which the affliction brought about." In our own day, Eugene Debs, the labor pioneer, caught something of the Spirit of the Master, and endured imprisonment, insults, and social ostracism, without either bitterness or resentment; and before he died this very endurance won for him a circle of defenders whose support he could have won in no other way. Suffering borne in this spirit becomes a means of redemption, it blazes the trail to a new and better world, and it inspires those who witness it as no less costly testimony can ever inspire anyone.

Dr. Moffatt's rendition of II Corinthians 7: 10, 11 has always seemed to me to be especially illuminating in this connection. Instead of the better known King James version, which states that "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of," Dr. Moffatt's translation says, "The pain God is allowed to guide ends in a saving repentance never to be regretted, whereas the world's pain ends in death." It is not surprising that a man with Stanley Jones' gift for exposition commented on this phrase, "It is wonderful what God can do with a broken heart if he gets all the pieces."

The apostle who wrote to the saints in Rome that "all things work together for good to them that love God," also wrote to the saints in Corinth saying, "I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities."<sup>6</sup> Paul had been greatly blessed of the Lord, but he had been required also to suffer more than most of his contemporaries. In order to be in fact a special witness of God to his generation, he had to learn to face calamity with the same calm faith which was his in victory. His sufferings had won for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"<sup>7</sup> because of the spirit in which they had been endured.<sup>8</sup>

The Christian solution of the problem of suffering does not lie along the line of escape, but along the line of courageous and faithful endurance. Since God is free, and is not limited in his actions by such of his laws as we now know, we may at times expect him to intervene so as to save us from pain and difficulty. He has done so

many times. But we cannot require him to save us as a condition of our faith. For reasons which seemed good to him, he permitted Herod to kill James, but a short time later sent an angel to deliver Peter from the same fate.<sup>9</sup> Yet Peter was not always delivered, the time came when he too suffered a martyr's death. And both James and Peter were equally content in that each knew his best interests were in the hands of a wise and loving Father. They had a sublime faith which assured them that so long as they followed the best guidance available, death would be swallowed up in victory.

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 9: 22. <sup>2</sup> Dr. L. P. Jacks in *The Art of Living Together*. <sup>3</sup> 2 Nephi 1: 81. <sup>4</sup> Matthew 5: 3, 4. <sup>5</sup> Acts 7: 54-60; Matthew 5: 10, 11. <sup>6</sup> Romans 8: 28; II Corinthians 11: 24-30. <sup>7</sup> II Corinthians 4: 16, 17. <sup>8</sup> Philippians 4: 12, 13. <sup>9</sup> Acts 12: 1-11.

## GOD IN THE SHADOWS

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### WHAT OF DEFEAT?

IT IS MUCH MORE EASY TO BELIEVE in God when things are going well than when every effort seems to end in frustration and defeat. Yet we cannot always win; and the real test of a man or of a nation comes when the going gets difficult. That is why we have such a high regard for courage and for endurance. What glorious chapters have been written in the history of mankind by those whose own generation accounted them failures: Jeremiah, William Wallace, Jean D'Arc, Joseph Mazzini, Robert E. Lee, Pastor Niemoller, and others who were different in every respect but this one, rank with our greatest heroes and belong to humanity rather than to any nation.

"Defeat may serve as well as victory  
To shake the soul and let the glory out.  
When the great oak is straining in the wind,  
The boughs drink in new beauty, and the trunk  
Sends down a deeper root to the windward side.  
Only the soul that knows the mighty grief  
Can know the mighty rapture. Sorrows come  
To stretch our spaces in the heart of joy."<sup>1</sup>

Failure and defeat are difficult to define, since our definitions depend on our standards of values. To an ambitious man, failure to secure election to prominent office seems disastrous defeat. To such a man the failure of "Joseph called Barsabas who was surnamed Justus to be selected as successor to Judas"<sup>2</sup> looks like a defeat. But the probability is that both Barsabas and Matthias, the successful candidate, wanted the best man for the work to be selected. The choice really had nothing to do with success or failure. Real failure might have occurred, however, if Barsabas had become bitter or if Matthias had become overbearing; real victory was probably secured in their continued friendship and co-operation.

To be a member of one of the poorly paid professions, and so to be denied some of the minor comforts of life, may seem to many to indicate failure. Yet many young men choose such professions carefully, with a view to the opportunities for service which they afford; and the limitations involved are accepted gladly in return for participation in constructive civic activities, and for association with public-spirited men and women. Many a country doctor, who has worked himself to death, and left no heritage to his children but his good name, was an outstanding success when measured by any worthwhile standard.

To fritter away one's life in self-pity because of some missed opportunity is certainly to fail; to miss one opportunity may easily be to find another. A young girl had great ambitions for a musical career. She fell in love with another musician, and they planned to seek success together. But soon after their marriage, he was stricken by a lingering disease, and in caring for him their meager savings were soon exhausted. From that time forward life seemed to hold nothing for her but drudgery and the memory of blasted hopes. She could have become bitter and complaining, resenting her lot as unfair and unjust. But instead of doing this, she compensated for every privation by the love she lavished on her daughter. This girl, growing to womanhood, and encouraged by her mother, attained the success in music which the other had longed for and been denied. Surely this woman had not failed; rather she had won more glorious success because of the threat of failure which had hung over her and tested her spirit.

No failure is tragic until it is final. When listing the great heroes of Israel, Paul said: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth."<sup>3</sup> Their cause was too great for victory to be won in one generation; and their apparent failures were really installments paid on the success which was yet to come.

These heroes of Israel were not real failures at all, but were akin to the cathedral builders who lived in the conviction that God would

raise up other generations to crown their work with glory. Similarly, in our own day, we know that every great scientist whose work receives public acclaim, and who is hailed as a great benefactor of society, stands high because he is elevated on the shoulders of countless unknowns who worked in the confident faith that someday a man would rise to redeem their efforts by adding the capstone of success.

Failure is one thing, and the consciousness of failure is another. To lack, and not to be aware of one's lack, is to be asleep while the enemy prepares to attack. The strength of sin, our common failure in the sight of God, lies in the fact that sin rapidly blinds its victims until soon they cannot see the sinfulness of their own sinning. The petty thief becomes so accustomed to being a thief that he comes in time to justify himself because of wickedness in high places, and at the same time he takes pride in his own nefarious dexterity. Meanwhile, the "big fellow" walks abroad unashamed because his social successes have blinded him to his own inner rottenness.

To fail, and to know oneself a failure, may engender humility and may be the beginning of success. That is why an older generation of church men were so eager for the wayward and the lost to feel a "conviction of sin"; that is, to recognize themselves for what they were. There was then some hope for them. Self-loathing is not a good place to stop; but by the grace of God it has often proved an excellent place to begin. Almost all the early glimpses of Peter which we get in the Gospels show him in a poor light, blind to the inner meaning of the Master's teaching, proud when he should have been most humble, boastful when he should have been silent, and asleep when he should have been most on the alert. If Peter had quit at any stage in his early development, what a picture of failure would have been left to us! But he did not quit. Instead he used his failures as steppingstones to greatness.

Frustration and failure may at times provide the stimulus for growth which we would not make otherwise. The laughter which stung Disraeli when he failed in his first speech in the House of Commons was a factor in making him a great orator in later years.

The bankruptcy of his publishers saddled Sir Walter Scott with a burden for which he should not have been held responsible; but the effort to meet this debt honorably produced some of his finest work and won him the love as well as the admiration of those who knew him. So, also, it was recognition of his own culpability in the death of Stephen that made the forgiveness of God seem so wonderful to Paul, and that refused to let him rest until he had exceeded all expectations in his service for the cause of Christ, which was also the cause of Stephen.

Nowadays we think a great deal of the friendship of successful people, and take pride in our contacts with the wise and the rich and the noble; but we might well take note, too, of the fellowship of those whose eyes have been opened by their own lack. Scott illustrates this in the speech of Jeannie Deans to Queen Caroline in the *Heart of Midlothian*:

"Alas, it is not when we sleep soft and wake merrily ourselves that we think on other people's suffering. Our hearts are waxed light within us then, and we are all for righting our ain wrangs and fighting our ain battles. But when the hour of death comes to high and low—lang and late may it be yours—Oh my leddy, then it isna what we hae dune for ourself, but what we hae dune for others, that we think on maist pleasantly."

The most endearing friendships that we know are those which are forged in the fires of public disfavor. Nothing has quite matched the fellowship of those who shared the sufferings of Jesus. Both Peter and Paul mention this; Peter says:

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the ordeal that has come to test you, as though some foreign experience befell you. You are sharing what Christ suffered; so rejoice in it, that you may also rejoice and exult when his glory is revealed. If you are denounced for the sake of Christ, you are blessed; for then the Spirit of glory and power, the Spirit of God himself, is resting on you."<sup>4</sup>

Evidently the Christian approach to failure and frustrations which are real, and not just the verdict of men who do not see the longer vision, is to meet them in the spirit of self-sacrifice, and thus to make

them yield all that they will of new humility, new insight, and new power. This principle is clearly of importance, for example, where genuinely Christian partners in an unwise or unfortunate marriage feel themselves under obligation to bear cheerfully and without bitterness the cross which is hidden in their most intimate relationships. Surely the elimination of endlessly wearing conflicts both within and between the man and woman involved is a fulfillment of the promise of Jesus: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."<sup>5</sup>

Meeting frustration and failure squarely like this is not easy. Indeed, to do so persistently and in every phase of life is not possible except as we are buoyed up by a spirit greater than our own. But this spirit is available for everyone. It is the Spirit of God. What we cannot do by ourselves in meeting frustration and failure, God does for us. This is not just a theory; it is proved by experience, and is the truth which Paul expressed in his great doctrine of salvation by faith. We are not saved by working from one difficulty to another; that leads to more and more disillusionment as we wake up to the enormity of our task. We are saved, rather, by the faith which sets us victoriously in the way of life and assures us that we are the sons of God and therefore born to victory.

To be the sons of God is to partake of the divine nature; not by adoption only, but in fact. To face life with the assurance of our sonship is therefore to face life with reasonable and inclusive confidence. Our great elder brother has already passed this way before us; and he has destroyed the fiction of the invincibility of our enemy. Sin and death have been defeated before; they can be defeated again. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."<sup>6</sup> "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin Markham. <sup>2</sup> Acts 1: 23-26. <sup>3</sup> Hebrews 11: 13. <sup>4</sup> I Peter 4: 12-14; see also Philippians 3: 10. <sup>5</sup> Matthew 11: 29, 30. <sup>6</sup> John 16: 33. <sup>7</sup> I Corinthians 15: 57, 58.

# GOD IN THE SHADOWS

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## DOES NOT DEATH MOCK US?

ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS OF LIFE and of religion is posed by the apparent caprice and finality of death. Death is clearly no respecter of persons, but calls on rich and poor, black and white, young and old, able and shiftless, with seeming impartiality. No matter how important a man's work might be to him or to others, he must answer when his summons comes. One of the questions we must face, then, is, "If there is a God, does he not mock us by the brevity and insecurity of life?"

Death usually travels in unpleasant company and tends to be known by the company he keeps. We judge death by his intimate associate, pain, or by his blood brother, separation. We rarely think of death in his own person, and when we do, we usually endow him with much larger powers than really belong to him. For death has no final authority, and speaks only in regard to the things of this life. He cannot touch the things of the spirit unless we give him authority to do so. And although it is true that death travels often in the company of pain and separation it is also true that death in time relieves us of the presence of pain and offsets the work of separation by leading to reunion.

Despite the company which he keeps, and the arrogance of his demands, death proves in the long run to be a true friend. What would we do if life were bounded by a high wall which was impossible to pierce and equally impossible to scale, and if the windows of life looked out on a beautiful and inviting country which we could never visit? Death opens the door and raises the windows into the beyond, and so does us all good service. For persons such as we are, to be without the possibility of escape from the life we have known so far would be infinitely worse than to have to walk a little way with death.



Consider for a moment the relation of death and time. If there were no death, and time were endless, we would have no urgent incentive to do things now. Tomorrow would be just as good as today. There would be no reason for hurry, no cause for special effort, no stimulation toward the growth which comes from the very fact that this is our day to build, and from the associated fact that we pass this way but once.

Consider, too, what the banishment of death would do to the heroism which we all prize so highly. If it were not possible to give up our lives for a worthy cause, the spiritual growth which comes from such an adventure would be completely beyond our range. In such days as these, when so many young men of promise are being beckoned by the imperious hand of death, we need to remember this. It is unpleasant to think of dying, and worse still to think of the death of young people of promise before that promise is fulfilled; but the heartache which so frequently accompanies death does not become tragic until death itself becomes trivial and unworthy. For a man to live because he has found nothing worth dying for is a far worse tragedy than for him to die because a worthy cause has claimed him. The great tragedy which threatens to overtake us tomorrow is that men, who have risen to the heights in their willingness to die for their fellows, shall be unable to see that this must then be crowned by manifest willingness to live with equal devotion, so that what many have died for shall not be lost.

It is just because we need the hazard of death to give life its rightful tang of heroism that God has ordained that immortality shall be a matter of faith rather than of exact scientific knowledge. If we knew with mathematical certainty that when Death calls we will step out of this life into the next, just as we might step from the house into the street, our devotion to the greatest causes we know would lose its deepest meaning. When men die willingly for a cause, they thereby tell mankind what it means to them—they testify of its greatness. Death makes this testimony possible; it would not be possible except for death.

It is an arresting thought that Christianity, which calls on all men

to so love one another that they are willing to die for one another, also gives to good men the assurance of faith that death is not final. The last word is always with God.

Because of these things, it does not become us to think of death too harshly. There is nothing which banishes pettiness and bitterness and resentment as death does, for all of us sense instinctively that these are out of place when death draws near. Is not the brevity of our lives an echo of the voice of God, telling us that we do not have to be mean and spiteful and cheap? And does not death engender courage and calmness in the soul when he bids us look steadfastly on his face and be unafraid?

In the long run death proves himself a friend; but although death gives life an urgency and a seriousness which life needs but would otherwise lack, death is only a friend because he lacks final authority. We are not finally subject to his will, but go on into life after we have answered his call. This is a fact of major importance for all of us. With immortality in view, the perspectives of life are changed. Our interests are transferred from the concerns of the body to the experiences of the spirit. If we have reasonable guarantees of immortality, if death does not end all, then what goes on through time and eternity is evidently much more important than what does not go on; love is more important than money, honor is more important than earthly success, and the growth of the soul is more important than the growth of prestige.

Something of this great truth is at the heart of the statement of Jesus: "He who heareth my word, and believeth on him who sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life."<sup>1</sup> This so impressed John that he not only reported it in his written account of the life of the Master, but he also made it one of the keynotes of his own life and ministry. Many years later he wrote: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."<sup>2</sup>

Both Jesus and John were here dealing with facts. They knew that persons who do not know God, and who do not love the brethren,

have their investments in things earthly; and these investments are always subject to the command of death. But those who set their hearts on things eternal, those who love the brethren, grow in spirit and in power. These have nothing to fear from death. They are already living on a higher plane than death can reach. They have already passed from the realm where death is dominant to the realm where life is dominant.

When our assurance of immortality is matched by the facts of our present life, we soon realize that we live now in a period of preparation. This is not to say that life as we know it is without value. On the contrary, there is much of beauty and happiness available for us to share with each other here and now. But the highest values of the present are part of the highest values of the future; and the best that time has for us is directly related to the best that eternity can offer us. The assurance of immortality carries with it an assurance that God is at work now, preparing us for the larger life that lies beyond.

Good men want to believe in immortality, for the rewards of quality grow with the passing of time. Drifters do not concern themselves about immortality; they drift into the hereafter as they have drifted through life. Wicked men have a vested interest in unbelief; for if there is no life to come there can be no future judgment for sins. We never hear of a criminal hoping that there is a life hereafter where he can continue his criminal activities, but we have heard of many who are sobered by the thought of immortality when confronted by imminent death, and who hope that by some measure of repentance here they can prepare for a better start there.

No matter what our wishes might be, this is no place for wishful thinking. We are therefore concerned with the evidence for immortality, and note immediately that while the type of evidence which can be adduced in support of belief in immortality is circumstantial rather than direct, there is no direct evidence to disprove this circumstantial evidence. Moreover, faith is by far the nobler hypothesis, and the road to faith is indicated by "a thousand arrows all pointing the same way."<sup>8</sup>

Jesus had no doubts about immortality, and he is an authority in this realm. When the Sadducees came to him with their rather flip-pant question about the resurrection, the Master did not advance any of the many arguments he might have cited, and some of which we ourselves shall note, but instead he rested his case on the fact that God is and that God loves men.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Jesus passed on this certainty of God and of the life which is to come to those who were nearest to him.<sup>5</sup> The Spirit of God does the same thing for believers today. The assurance of immortality is an experience shared by millions. Men and women who seek earnestly to do the will of God find that their faith and this assurance grow together and are in fact inseparably connected with each other. In our own time God is at work, broadening the horizons of life for all who put their trust in him.

We are precious in the sight of God, not as means to an end but as ends in ourselves. He loves us for our own sake. He wants us to grow in wisdom and in grace and in power. Having brought us thus far, it is unthinkable that he will permit anything to deny him the love which is gradually coming to birth in our hearts, and which is the only reward he asks for all that he has done for us. A violin maker would be more likely to perfect a beautiful instrument and then dash it to the ground without playing a single note, or a horticulturist to perfect an exquisite rose and then destroy the seed, than God would be to cast us away now.

We know that even such creatures as we are of infinite promise. The poorest of us have so many unexplored possibilities that life here does not give us time to do any more than prophesy their presence. We are like perennial flowers which have just come to blossom, but which will not show their full splendor until they are awakened to a far brighter and more inviting season. We are fashioned to live finely, here and now, and we are also destined to live gloriously, there and then.

At our best, all of us feel this way. Our imagination soars, and we want spiritual elbow room. We dream of days which are yet to come and which we shall never see, and we make our investments in

those days. Surely there is some possibility that we shall enjoy those investments, the best that we are capable of making, if not here, then elsewhere.

God is at work in the world now, and one of the ways in which he makes himself known is by the enlargement and refinement of our concept of immortality. His plans for us are more joyous and free and beautiful than any that we can think of for ourselves. Indeed, the best that we can think of at any time is generally the absence of some small irritation, or the presence of some creature comfort. Because of this we have frequently thought of the hereafter in terms of golden streets and beautiful music and freedom from pain. None of these things are necessarily true; they are just our efforts to reach forward toward understanding. But in the heart of these imaginings there is something of truth, and the Spirit of God is steadily making this truth more clear.

The life to come cannot be a life where people "rest" in the sense of being permanently at ease. On the contrary, it must be a life of purposeful activity. There may even be pain there, for God suffers. If we retain our agency, the possibility of temptation will be there, for Lucifer, the "Son of the Morning," was tempted even in the presence of God. But however uncertain we may be concerning details of the future life, the assurance of that life grows in us as we grow in the knowledge of God. And whatever else is lacking, we confidently expect to find there fellowship and beauty and truth and goodness. There is a program for the whole of life here and now in the promise of the Lord Jesus: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John 5: 24. <sup>2</sup> I John 3: 14. <sup>3</sup> Alfred Noyes in *The Unknown God*. <sup>4</sup> Mark 12: 18-27. <sup>5</sup> II Timothy 1: 10. <sup>6</sup> Revelation 2: 10.

# WE CAN SEE GOD AT WORK

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## IN GEOGRAPHY

HOW WOULD YOU MAKE A WORLD if you had a chance to make one? Would you balance things up evenly? Would you create neat and symmetrical land areas, each having access to its own particular seas? Would you balance mountains with plains and heat with cold? Would you weigh carefully the fertility, the mineral resources and the fishing wealth of each land so as to be quite sure that no single land had opportunities denied to other lands? Or would you have the land areas of your world graduated in size so that the largest would have resources commensurate with its size, so that the smallest would be endowed in a manner suited to its position, and so that all the land areas in between would be blessed or neglected as might seem wise to you? Or, again, would you bless some areas for now, and hide in other lands riches which could be developed so as to give them pre-eminence in years yet unborn? The more we think about this business of world-building, the more complicated it appears to be.

When we see a well-built house, which is surprisingly adapted to the needs of those who live there, we feel quite sure that it was built by an intelligent person who was concerned about satisfying the housing needs of specific people. As we look around us, we find that the earth has been marvelously adapted to the needs of plants and of animals and of human beings as these have appeared on the earth. It is far more easy to believe that some supervising intelligence fitted flora and fauna to their environment than it is to imagine that the marvelous adaptation of life to its environment is the result of blind chance.

World-building is not as easy as it first appears, but it is clear that the process has to follow one of five lines:

It must be blind and unpurposed; or  
It must be fashioned so as to satisfy the wishes of its Creator; or  
It must be fashioned as a means of developing its inhabitants; or  
It must be fashioned to please its Creator *and* to be an instrument in the development of its inhabitants; or, finally,  
It must be fashioned with some degree of life within itself, so that it may best answer the purpose of its own creation in giving the richest possible satisfaction to its Creator and being the finest possible instrument in the development of its people.

It is more heartening to see that the last of these alternatives is more readily believable and more fully supported by the available evidence, than either of the others taken by itself.

The world is one; that is to say, its parts are interrelated; and the more we know about it the more conclusive the evidence becomes that every part of the world needs the support of every other part if it is to function at its best. One aspect of this great fact has been in the mind of every would-be world conqueror from the beginning of history until the emergence of Hitler. All of them wanted distant parts of the world to minister to them. But God is greater than all other aspirants for world dominion in the very fact that he has planned from the beginning that the resources of any part of the world shall be available to meet the needs of every part of the world.

It is obvious, of course, that the ministry of one part of the earth to another is not direct, but that it is accomplished through the persons who inhabit these regions. Indeed, it is accomplished both through and for such persons. There is a great purpose at work in the universe, and this purpose centers in men. It is the purpose of God.

The Creator of the world in which we live has achieved the utmost variety in this matter of the interchange of the wealth of lands and peoples by the simple expedient of making every land different from every other land in shape, resources, and accessibility. He has then reinforced this variety in an orderly manner by adding the influence of climate and element—the wind and the rain, the rivers and the seas, and the unfailing procession of the seasons.

There is a sense in which every nation is a "chosen people," since every one has unique opportunities by reason of its unique geography. We talk of the Jews, for example, as the chosen people, and refer back to the promise which God made to their great ancestor, Abraham, as evidence of this choice. But is there not additional evidence in the fact that the maker of the promise led the Hebrews to the Promised Land, where they grew into nationhood at the crossroads of civilization? With the sea in front of them and the desert behind them, all the cultural and spiritual life of the ancient world flowed through them. Here their location demanded that they should grow toward greatness. Otherwise they would have been submerged. They did become great; and "when the vessel had been filled, the same geographical necessities sprinkled its contents all over the world."<sup>1</sup>

Englishmen tend to regard themselves as a chosen people, too, particularly in view of the significant world position which they have come to occupy. It is of interest to note, therefore, that the chief factor in shaping her foreign policy has been the geographical position of England, the greatest single factor being the narrowness of the strip of water dividing England from continental Europe. Other geographical factors have also had their influence in the development of characteristic English traits. Because the land was so flat and so easily accessible from the continental side, and because many river mouths and bays made this access even more easy, wave after wave of foreign peoples invaded and partially conquered the land, so that the Englishman of today has behind him the blood and the social and historic influence of Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Jutes, Danes, Normans, and others. Moreover, the variable weather in the British Isles, coupled with freedom from extremes of heat or cold, have made England a delightful place to live; and since England is small enough for it to be well known by its people, there has thus grown up a passionate love of the land for its own sake. The relation between this love of homeland and love of freedom is obvious, and has been a significant factor in world history.

The size and geographical isolation of the Americas have obviously been major factors in shaping the lives and destinies of the American



peoples, as has the almost complete separation of the northern and southern American continents. Think, too, of the accessibility of the entire eastern seaboard, the complementary nature of the resources available from north to south along this coast, the navigability of the Mississippi and its tributaries, the vast extent of the prairies, the influence of the great lakes on climate and transportation, and a thousand other factors directing the channel of development of the United States. All in all, it is difficult to explain this confluence of favorable conditions without postulating some controlling purpose and some controlling power.

The wealth which now enriches our generation depends ultimately on natural resources which were distributed long ago by the open-handed liberality of Divinity. Coal was stored away long before we knew of its existence or felt a need for it. Iron was hidden under the earth to await other developments which would combine to usher in the iron age. Oil was left to mellow in the ground for untold ages, so that our generation might ride the earth and sky and sea with such speed as to make the whole world at last a neighborhood.

God has not only been generous of his gifts; but he has also been discreet. There is a timeliness about his giving and his withholding which is too wisely calculated to be accidental. These gifts both bless us and point back to the giver. For many generations, continents and islands developed their own civilizations in comparative isolation from each other. But the pace of the discovery of things which they had and which other people needed, and of things that other people had and which they needed, quickened as the years passed. Every new discovery has tended to break down the barriers which hitherto separated men—mountains were pierced, oceans were crossed, the air itself is being conquered, and even language differences are being nullified. As we grow, we are growing together.

The indentation of coast lines to make possible ports and harbors does not indicate beyond doubt that God arranged them in this way so as to promote international trade. Nor does the peculiar distribution of raw materials indicate that these necessities were placed a long way from where they were desired just so that men would have to

work together in order to secure them. Nor, again, does the spirit of adventure in the hearts of some men necessarily show that God made them that way so that they would sail from these various coast lines to distant lands where needed materials were available and bring these goods back for the use of their own people. None of these things is conclusive proof; but the accumulation of a multitude of such facts, so numerous and varied that they are part of the very warp and woof of life, does create an undeniably strong presumption that there is an ingenious and resourceful mind at work, a mind of matchless organizing ability, a mind greater than anything known among men. It is the mind of God.

These evidences of the creative activity of God all around us lead us to ask why our Creator has chosen to work in just the ways he has. Certainly, he has not taken such care of details and of inter-relationships just in order to watch the world go around. Nor has he absent-mindedly crowned his creation with such indescribable beauty as all of us have recognized in the bursting leaf buds and the green-ing fields of spring, or in the elfin white draperies of winter. There is purpose here, and serious purpose at that. God is not primarily interested in our comfort, or he would have wedded tropical life to efficiency, instead of divorcing them from each other. He cannot be primarily concerned about our safety, or he would not have made the world such a glamorous place for adventure. Nor can he be eager for us to be identical with each other, or he would not have made us so diverse, and then augmented this diversity in a million different ways. Is it not clear that the God who made our kind of world is passionately devoted to people, but not just to any kind of people? He is still in the business of making men who face life together and unafraid, and who grow both individually and in a brotherhood as they learn from life under his guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Good God*, by John Hadham, Penguin Edition, 1940, page 28. Used by permission of the publishers.

# WE CAN SEE GOD AT WORK

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## IN HISTORY

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN HISTORY was regarded as just a compilation of dates and facts, notably those having to do with conflicts and the acquisition of empire. Many of us have also regarded history as the story of the doings of outstanding persons, and again the persons regarded as outstanding have usually been statesmen and generals and rulers and the like. But gradually we are coming to realize that history is far more inclusive than this. It is not something that is written in books only, it is recorded in the lives of men and women and in the things they do. History is written in roads and buildings and songs and books. It is the story of life as it is lived by people everywhere and under all sorts of conditions. The true historian with the modern point of view soaks himself in a maze of facts drawn from thousands of sources, and then endeavors to see what great principles lie behind these facts. He looks backward in order that he may look forward intelligently. He seeks to know what has happened so as to be more able to predict what is likely to happen or, better still, to influence events so constructively that we shall not repeat the same old mistakes over and over again.

Almost everyone likes adventure stories; and history, if we read it rightly, is the greatest and most absorbing adventure story of all time. The story of mankind gets its color and romance from the innovators and the rebels and the martyrs. Without them, history would be mere repetition, and each age an echo of what has gone before. Because of them, history has high drama and warm romance and gay comedy and stark tragedy. And yet commonplace folk have their place in history, too. Without them the story of the race would lack body and stability, and our yesterdays would be forgotten.

But real history is not just a matter of dates and facts. It is concerned ultimately with God and man on a journey together. Once we are convinced that God is, and that he is interested in mankind, this follows as a matter of course. We look for the footprints of God as well as those of great men in the sands of time. If we are sure that our Father has lessons to teach us, then history is a school which we shall do well to attend. And if God has for us some word that is especially hard to understand, or that we have become unwilling to heed, or that cannot be well illustrated in the few short years at our disposal, then history offers us a longer view and a broader experience and so leads toward a melting of minds between men and God.

The major qualification of the historian is ability to observe or discover facts and to record them faithfully. This is fairly clear. But what is not so immediately clear is the difficulty of discovering the most important facts, for these facts concern what takes place in men's hearts and minds. They have to do with motives. The facts which are important to historians are not primarily such observable facts as the Revolutionary War, but the underlying facts which led to the war—what happened in the hearts and minds of men to make the war inevitable and to sustain the Colonists through seeming defeat until they had turned despair into victory.

The more we think about history, the more important these invisible factors in history appear to be. What is important for our guidance is not merely knowledge of what has happened in the past, but knowledge of why it has happened, and of what we may expect people to do under similar conditions.

We see, then, that history has to do with the daily activities of ordinary people and with the thoughts they think and the ideals which inspire them. Truly history also has to do with the rise and fall of empires, and with the emergence of great movements, and with the leadership of great men; but behind empires and movements and men are these daily activities and thoughts and purposes. Once we sense this, we see immediately that our belief that God is concerned with the well-being of ordinary folk, and that he influences

their thoughts and feelings and actions, means that God is at work in history. He may raise up such a man as Moses, and so save Israel; or he may cause his wind to blow and scatter the great Spanish Armada and so save England. But he is not only manifest in these startling events; he is involved in all things both small and great. He has given us our agency; but he has also retained his own agency, and he is therefore free to work in the world—with us, and in us, and through us, and around us—so as to bring to pass his eternal purposes.

The prophets of Israel were sharply aware of the hand of God in history. Their story began with the statement, "In the beginning God," and this great truth colored all their teachings. Because God is supreme, they saw that everything that happens is in some way related to him. The inspiration of the historical books of the Old Testament does not consist in the accuracy with which these books record what happened, but in the picture which they give of God at work in Israel; inspiring the Hebrews with a sense of destiny, judging their disloyalty to that destiny, and using every circumstance to reclaim them for the work to which they had been called. And at every point where the influence of Divinity is felt, this is accomplished through men. God is shown as working with craftsmen, and with artists, and with poets and with teachers. "In all great and mighty deeds, in the beauty of art and in the wisdom of literature, they saw the hand of God."

Following the lead given us by these spiritual leaders of the past, we may look confidently for the touch of Divinity anywhere and everywhere in history. Nor must we imagine that divine guidance comes only to men and women of exalted moral character. The writers of the Old Testament do not hesitate to state that Samson, David, and Solomon were "inspired," although they also tell us that at the very time these were sinful men. Truly the power of David and Solomon to respond to divine guidance was seriously handicapped by their wickedness; but the fact that musicians and poets and inventors and statesmen have been used by God and endowed by him with wisdom and understanding and skill may possibly give us a new

point of view from which to study the true nature of man's usefulness to God. God sometimes works with a man who is responsive on the artistic plane, even though he cannot work with the same man on the spiritual plane. And God frequently works with a man who is responsive on the spiritual plane, even though he cannot work with the same man on the artistic plane. Tragedy frequently enters here. Divinity has blessed the man who obeys the laws of artistic understanding and skill, even though this man then betrays the very God who blessed him by being untrue to the laws of spiritual life. Compare Milton with Byron or Alfred Noyes with Oscar Wilde. The lesson for all of us to learn is that God can only use us as fully and safely as we respond to him with all the rich possibilities of our nature. This is what Jesus meant when he said that the first commandment is that we shall love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength.

While there is abundant evidence of the concern of Divinity with individual men and women, we can get the clearest picture of God at work when we contemplate history in its larger aspects. Then we can see the fusion of his influence in the lives of men and his directing hand manifest through other channels. We can see, for example, that although civilizations reach their peak and fall, what they have been and what they have won are never entirely lost. Greece has left to succeeding generations a wealth of philosophy and art which survived her own decay. Rome has bequeathed us a conception of law and order which is part of our heritage today, long after the Roman Empire has ceased to be. These and other bequests are being seen in their true value when all that the past has given us is fitted into place in the light of the revolutionary teaching which is at the heart of Christianity—the teaching that all men are the children of God, and that therefore all are uniquely important by right of their own intrinsic worth.

When considered in these larger aspects, history is a great stimulus to constructive faith in God. As an example, take these aspects of the founding of the Republic of the United States. In 1781 the fathers of the Republic assembled in Philadelphia and drafted the Federal Constitution, which later was ratified by the States. Under

this Constitution a new type of government came into being with power lodged in the center to supplement the power lodged in its parts, this power being expressed in law which derived its sanction from the people. When the philosophers of the Old World heard of this new experiment in government, they were quite sure that it could not possibly work. They admitted that democracies had existed in Greece and in modern times in Switzerland, but Greece was a democracy of city states, and the Cantons of Switzerland covered very small areas. The idea of a democracy covering a continent and functioning according to laws deriving their sanction from the people seemed preposterous. Yet the experiment was made, and immediately the problems of administration began to multiply. The frontier was pushed beyond the Ohio, then beyond the Mississippi, and then over the Rockies. Yet the Republic did not fall apart. Instead it grew stronger and stronger. What, then, about the doubts and fears of the Old World philosophers? It is easy to decry their judgment from this vantage point; but, actually, they had good reason for their doubts. What made the new experiment in government work was the fact that after the experiment had been started on its way, men made discoveries and inventions which kept it going, and without which the United States would not have survived as a democracy. The steamboat, the railway, the telegraph, the telephone, and the radio have all played their part in keeping us close to each other, so that we are one people despite our numbers and the vast area and varied nature of our homeland.<sup>1</sup> What has been reviewed here has happened many, many times. The genius of mankind constantly rises to provide the means for fulfilling its dreams, until, realizing this fact in history, it dawns on us that more than human genius is involved in the process. God is stimulating us to build for better tomorrows and is arming us as we meet unexpected problems, so that if we but strive in faith we have the promise of history that we shall win through to victory.

What is God interested in? History says that he is concerned about men; and that he uses the love of freedom in the hearts of unlettered peasants to dethrone kings, and the love of truth in the souls of un-

known thinkers to give power to all mankind, and that even such wicked men as the "robber barons" can become his instruments in opening up a continent and in unifying its people. He must love the common people, not only because he made so many of them, but also because he has invested so much in them, in so many ways, down all the generations of the yesterdays.

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Spiritual Element in History*, by Robert McLaughlin.



# WE CAN SEE GOD AT WORK

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## IN THE MARCH OF PROGRESS

PROGRESS WAS ONE OF THE watchwords of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Browning was speaking for Victorian England when he said that "progress is the law of life." This mood of optimism continued until the time of the First World War, but the shattering impact of that great conflict made easy optimism impossible. Since that time not a few thinking men have questioned whether mankind is making any progress at all. It is obvious, of course, that we know many things which our fathers did not know. But it is not nearly as obvious that our fundamental needs are any better satisfied than they used to be. One historian has suggested that every step forward has led to a step backward; he illustrates this by pointing out that inventions and machinery have killed the old handicrafts, and that the increase of social agencies has tended to destroy the old spirit of independence.

The closer we look, and the more critical our scrutiny, the more sure we become that progress has not been uniform or even continuous. We have improved our machinery and organized our industrial life, but production has become mechanized and human values have been lost. Selfishness appears to be as real and as aggressive as ever. We are achieving far greater command over nature than the world ever knew before. Water, steam, electricity, and the air itself are now our servants. But this very fact helps to blind us to the further fact that we probably have less self-control than our fathers had. Superficially, at least, we have grown through the extension of brotherly kindness. Bearbaiting and cockfighting have gone and so have public stocks and whipping posts and filthy prison conditions. But our age has developed refinements of mental torture, under which a growing number of people collapse every year.

Twenty years ago Dean Inge discussed this problem with insight and foresight. He said, "I believe that the accumulated experiences of mankind and his wonderful discoveries are of great value. I only point out that they do not constitute real progress in human nature itself; and in the absence of real progress, these gains are external, precarious, and liable to be turned to their own destruction, as new discoveries in chemistry may easily be."<sup>1</sup> How wonderfully the insight of the "gloomy Dean" has been vindicated in the experience of the war.

From the time of Socrates and even earlier, it has been thought that the more a man knows the better he is; but this is not true. Obviously intelligence and skill have a great deal to do with progress, but they do not guarantee it. Inventions are neutral: an airplane can carry bombs or medicine, a printing press can turn out great literature or true confessions, a university can sharpen a man's abilities for world service or for a career in international crime. We are not confronted today with any marked deficiency in knowledge. World wars are not caused by any lack of scientific understanding or inventive genius. The difficulty is that we have made tremendous advances in such fields; but these neutral advances have not been safeguarded for humanity because they have not been balanced by advances in the moral field. It is the experience of the race that in the long run only a good man can be safely trusted with large power.

There is a difference between movement and progress. Movement involves only activity, but progress involves the achievement of goals. We are not making progress until we are on our way somewhere that we choose to go. Indeed, we are not making real progress until we are on our way to a goal which will satisfy our deepest needs. Many a man has wrecked his life because he has not realized this. He has striven for riches, and then when he has won them he has found that they did not satisfy the deeper needs of his nature. He may have moved from poverty to riches; but he did not make progress from spiritual isolation into the heart of the family of God. So, too, civilization is moving from ignorance to knowledge, and from crudity

to comfort; but not even these gains are secure until we make progress from isolation to fellowship and from rebellion to God.

Real progress involves intelligence and skill and social participation; but it also involves certain moral and spiritual achievements without which the whole enterprise is placed in jeopardy. Both types of gains have their part and support each other. Thus the "horse and buggy" doctor may have been a good man, but he was heavily handicapped by lack of knowledge and of equipment. Modern medical science has freed the doctor's mind through the exchange of information and the sharing of experience, and it has lighted his way and unloosed his hands by the development of electrical equipment and medical instruments. On the other hand, the modern doctor may be much more able and much better equipped than his grandfather was, but if he uses his skill to make money by pandering to social ills and furthering the spread of crime, he is nevertheless a menace to society.

We have distinguished between movement and progress. We should also distinguish between growth and progress. Growth is primarily individual, but progress is primarily social; although the distinction should not be pressed too far. We think of flowers and trees and children as growing, but we think of armies and nations and humanity as making progress. The Apostle Paul had both individual growth and group progress in mind when he wrote to the saints in Ephesus that the ministry had been set in the church:

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ."<sup>2</sup>

In its larger aspects, then, genuine progress involves the fact of people growing together. It has to do with sharing tasks and skills and insight and knowledge. A man cannot make progress by himself. He must take his brother along. A nation cannot make true progress by itself. She must take along her sister nations. And a generation cannot make much progress by itself, it must build its growth on the

generation which went before and stretch its hands to the generation which is coming after.

A fundamental condition of real progress is that we shall learn to be just, as well as able. The last century has witnessed an almost unbelievable increase in the available wealth of the world; but this very advance has produced maladjustments between groups and nations because our sense of moral obligation, our sense of justice has failed to keep pace with our controls over nature and over things. We have learned to produce well, but we have not learned to distribute fairly. Every great civilization has been built upon slavery of one form or another. That is true in our own time, even as it was true in the history of the past. The men who have, and the men who can, dominate those who do not have and those who do not know how. It is human nature that this should happen; but it is the divine will that it should not happen. A fundamental condition of progress is that we should be honest with ourselves and with our neighbors in using the opportunities of our generation, not only because this is a good policy but because it is right.

Materially minded men of affairs are now telling us that if strong nations wish to remain strong and well-endowed they must show a helpful interest in the welfare of nations which are not so strong and which are not so well-endowed. England must show concern for the rights of the people of India, and the Anglo-Saxon peoples must help bear the burdens of the peoples of China and of Africa. This is not recommended in the name of our common humanity, so much as in the name of self-interest. But it will be found that mutual helpfulness has to have a more adequate foundation than selfishness. A sense of brotherhood under God is necessary if strong men and powerful nations are to develop the spirit of trusteeship and are to consider themselves stewards over their own strength for the common good.

Isolationism is now rightfully discarded as an international policy. This has come as a result of catastrophe. Many more catastrophes will come unless we adopt the program of mutual aid between individuals and societies and nations. The increasing tempo of prog-

ress demands an increasing range of co-operation. At first glance it may seem that co-operation is best induced by encouraging uniformity and discouraging departures from the norm or standard, but this is not really so. As Paul pointed out long ago, there are "diversities of gifts" and "the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body."<sup>3</sup> Our experience has been that the rebels and the innovators have probably done more to advance the cause of humanity than the conformists. In the very nature of things, a pioneer stands out in front of the crowd. Socrates and Galileo and Pasteur and others of their stamp had few admirers in their day, and yet not many men have done more for humanity. A clash of doctrines should not be a disaster to honest men, but an opportunity to see the truth from another vantage point. Other nations of different habits should not be regarded for this reason as enemies, but as godsend; they can help us to see life in a new guise.<sup>4</sup> We can only achieve real progress if we encourage the clash of personalities in the spirit of brotherhood, for we need differences to stimulate us to new discovery.

The climbing instincts of humanity, and our discontent with things as they are, are part of our human heritage. They have to be accounted for just as the more stationary instincts of the lesser animals call for some explanation. The same God who taught the bird how to build its nest, and then left it content with that type of nest for three million generations, has inspired us with a hunger which will not let us rest. But he has not left us to work out our own salvation alone. There is no reason that we have yet discovered why our movement along the generations should be steadily forward and upward. Apparently it might just as easily have been downward. But whenever it has been necessary, the right man and the right spirit and the right circumstances have developed, and what might have resulted in a step backward has after all turned out to be one more step taken in the right direction.

Thoreau once pointed out that recorded history can be covered in the lives of sixty old ladies, each telling the next younger one what happened when she was a girl, and all of them stringing their expe-

riences together in the informal conversation of a tea party whose gossip would be universal history. This seems fanciful at first, but most of us know men who knew older men, who in turn knew Joseph Smith and the other leaders of the Restoration. If such a group of people could in fact be brought together, what would be their verdict in relation to progress? Would they not say:

"We are here, my brothers, for what end? To serve the purpose and the spirit that has been breathed into our lives. We live, not for ourselves, but for growth, growth that goes on forever. To grow out of our cracks and crannies, out of our meanness and bitterness, out of our blindness grow, at last, into the understanding of God."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Romanes Lectures*, 1920, "The Idea of Progress," by W. R. Inge. <sup>2</sup> Ephesians 4: 14-16. <sup>3</sup> I Corinthians 12: 12. <sup>4</sup> See A. N. Whitehead in *Science and the Modern World*. <sup>5</sup> H. G. Wells in *The World of Wm. Gladstone*.

# WE CAN SEE GOD AT WORK

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## IN THE SCIENCES

ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH confronts the man of faith lies in the purported incompatibility of faith and science; and this is one of the problems of life which cannot be resolved by ignoring it. Both faith and science are too important to be ignored. Each must take note of the other, and if one is under special obligation to take the initiative in this *rapprochement*, that one is faith.

"The real skeptic," says Ernest Fremont Tittle, "is the man who has so little faith in his own position that he is afraid to have it critically examined; who has so little confidence in truth that he fears to have more of it discovered; who is tormented by the thought that if he knew more he might believe less."

The fears of some men of faith would be rather amusing if the results of these fears were not so tragic, for science itself has already provided answers to many of the questions which bothered faith a generation ago, and the conflict between the two is now more imaginary than real. Science and religion are different ways of looking at the universe, and each has tools that are adapted to its own purpose but which are not specially adapted to the other. Each has its certainties, and these should reinforce each other. Certainly truths learned in one sphere should supplement and not come into conflict with truths learned in the other.

Science has to do with the measurable facts of life, and religion is concerned with the immeasurable facts of life. Science weighs and measures, and religion judges and evaluates. Science deals with such realities as iron and oxygen and germ plasm, measurable things which are of importance in the business of living, while religion deals with such realities as sin and judgment and salvation, immeasurables which are of importance in time and in eternity.

The end of the last century saw the close of a great era of scientific inquiry and the beginning of an even greater era. By that time astronomers and mathematicians had charted the heavens, geologists had explored the earth, and biologists had written new chapters in the story of life itself. All their conclusions then seemed to point in one general direction, and this was that if only we could delve deeply enough, we should someday find a complete mechanical explanation of the universe and of all that it holds, ourselves included. Everything would be weighed and measured, at last, in terms borrowed from the engineer. The world, as some of these scientists saw it, seemed only to need a "great first cause" to explain how it was started on its way and what had kept it going. It was here that the quarrel between scientists and religionists developed bitterness. The progress made in many branches of science during the past forty years, however, has rendered mechanistic theories obsolete. The clearer vision of men of faith has also helped toward understanding. Today many of the leaders on both sides are exchanging experiences in the spirit of fraternity and mutual helpfulness, and this is good religion and good scientific procedure also. It is already thirty years since Lord Balfour said, "We know too much about matter to be materialists."<sup>1</sup>

Science has admittedly affected our outlook on life. Boys who were in school a couple of years ago have now flown "o'er land and ocean without rest," and have ushered in a new era with its revised geography and its strangely foreshortened distances, both of which leave the earth-minded peoples of an earlier generation more than a little bewildered. But whatever else science may have altered, there are some things which still abide and which show no sign of being shaken. We still feel awe in the presence of holiness, and shame when we meet cowardice, and indignation when we confront injustice and cruelty. We still feel that we have betrayed our best selves when we forsake a righteous cause, and that we have tasted the joys of eternity when we hear and obey the challenging demands of conscience. As long as such experiences are available to us, we may be sure that God lives, and that because he lives, faith shall not die.



Science, like religion, rests on certain assumptions which seem to most of us to be so well founded that we hardly think of them as assumptions at all. Scientists live by their faith in the doctrine that similar causes produce similar effects and in the dictum that matter is indestructible, and in the assurance that the observation of one man may be verified by another under like conditions. Without such faith there would be no science; but as any scientist will tell you, the wisdom and validity of this faith is revealed in its fruits.

When we talk of science, many of us think only of observation and experiments and theories; but more important than any of these is the spirit in which the true scientist works. This spirit is one of complete and unselfish loyalty to the truth. The scientist is convinced that only the truth can make men genuinely free, and by the light of this conviction, he leads his generation by many strange ways, but always away from darkness and toward the light. The story of scientific advance, therefore, has its own compelling grandeur, and few of us can read the story without feeling that God has been at work both in the movement as a whole and in the lives of individual scientists.

Many men of science have approached their work in the spirit of devotion. Johannes Kepler, the German astronomer, talked of his pioneering as "thinking God's thoughts after him"; and it is related that when Joseph Henry, the American physicist and scientific administrator, arranged the materials for an experiment, he told his pupils that he had asked God a question and that they must await the answer.

In an address, "How Genius Works," Edwin Emery Slosson, the chemist, once said:

"Science is built up by patient and persistent labor, most of it drudgery of the hardest kind. But it is not altogether done by work of the bricklayer sort, the slow fitting together of facts upon facts and cementing them in place with the mortar of logic. There must come to somebody sometime the vision of things as a whole, the fundamental theory of things complete and perfect. This vision may come in a flash quite like the inspiration of the author or artist, and often, when the mind is not conscious of working on the problem, but is, so to speak, of God. It seems almost as though the answer were being whispered to him from

without by someone who had watched in sympathy his fruitless efforts to solve it."<sup>2</sup>

We find in the biographies of the men of science, frequent references to this so curious sense of inspiration. If this is indeed true, it is not to be wondered at that many of our greatest scientists have also been men of faith. This list includes such names as Kelvin, Pasteur, Curie, Millikan, Pupin, and so many others that to attempt to complete the list would be tedious.

Although the methods and the fields of action of science differ from those of religion, they frequently have much in common. In the study of psychology and sociology this is evidently true. It is of interest, also, to note that science as well as religion has much to do with the unseen. In the realm of physics, for example, the scientist deals with atoms and molecules which he cannot see and about whose existence he therefore has only circumstantial evidence. In view of this fact, there is a new humility to be found among scientists, coupled with a new appreciation of the soundness of the evidence upon which Christians build their faith. Thus one of the greatest of modern thinkers has said, "There is nothing more real than what has come in religion. To compare facts such as these with what is given to us in outward existence would be to trifle with the subject. The man who demands a reality more solid than that of the religious consciousness seeks he does not know what."<sup>3</sup>

Faith and science, then, are not necessarily antagonistic to each other, but instead they can be helpful allies. Faith, for example, can teach science to remember the limitations under which every scientist works, for by the very fact that the scientist deliberately closes his eyes to things which cannot be measured in order that he can concentrate on those which can be measured, he also closes his eyes to facts and values which are of major importance and which he might forget if the man of faith were not at hand to remind him of love and mercy and honor and decency.

On the other hand, there are lessons for faith to learn from science. Consider, for example, faith itself. The religious man's faith in the God of righteousness is sometimes less stalwart than the scientific

man's faith in an orderly universe. The scientist acts in obedience to natural laws for which he knows no reason. He cannot explain these laws. He knows the "how," but not the "why" of their operation. He proceeds on authority, experience, and hope. His whole adventure is an act of faith.

Consider, too, the fine humility of the true scientist. Many years ago Francis Bacon wrote, "We cannot command nature except by obeying her."<sup>4</sup> By "obedience" Bacon meant that patient and disciplined and honest observation which seeks the truth and not merely what is desired, and he meant in addition such fearless action as is based on the truth in sublime disregard of all appearances to the contrary. Obedience such as this, and courage such as this, have been exemplified so many times by scientists both great and small that it has become a tradition and a heritage in the light of which the men of science live and serve.

When it seems to the man of faith that righteousness and truth are being forced to wait an undue time for vindication, he can well take counsel of the geologist, whose study of the rocks has taught him patience. Standing side by side, they can look undaunted at the defeats of the moment because they see God at work in the ages, and they know together that in the long run he is always more than conqueror. As they stand there they may be joined by the biologist or the physicist, or both, and from these learn of the infinite patience of Divinity displayed in the care with which organic and inorganic things are fitted to their environment and to each other. And again the man of faith may well take courage, or, better yet, he may go back to see if he has done all that he can do to so care for the part of the work which has been committed to his keeping that no lack of his shall delay the cause.

Twenty years ago Dr. C. A. Ellwood observed, "A new hope has come into the world that science may unite with religion in the work of redeeming mankind."<sup>5</sup> The trend toward co-operation has, in fact, been nurtured throughout the centuries by scientists of the first order, among whom might be mentioned Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Faraday, Leibnitz, Kelvin, and Pasteur. It was with this in

mind that Professor K. F. Mather, head of the department of geology at Harvard, wrote, "Already many of them (scientists and theologians) are marching shoulder to shoulder in their endeavor to combine a trained and reasoning mind with a faithful and loving heart in every human individual." Many of us will be but camp-followers in such an advance; but it should help us to follow gladly, to feel in our hearts that we are not following great men only, but the light which comes to honest men from God.

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<sup>1</sup> *Gifford Lectures*, 1913. <sup>2</sup> *American University Courier*, December 1924.  
<sup>3</sup> Bradley, F. H., British scientist and philosopher in *Appearance and Reality*, page 449. By permission of the Macmillan Company, Publishers. <sup>4</sup> *Novum Organum* CXXIX. <sup>5</sup> Opening address, Yale Divinity School, 1924.

# WE CAN SEE GOD AT WORK

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## IN EVOLUTION

THE IDEA OF EVOLUTION HAS BECOME part of the common stock of our thought and speech during the past three quarters of a century. The overwhelming majority of educated men and women take the theory of evolution for granted. Every high school student meets it; and the vast amounts of evidence which may be marshaled in support of the fundamental idea of evolution is stupendous. There are differences within the ranks of scientists concerning important details of the working of evolution as a law of biological science, but not about the essential idea of evolution. However little we may yet know about the method of evolution, that is, about the origins of species, the doctrine of evolution has come to stay.

The religious man, as such, is not concerned about the rightness or wrongness of evolutionary theories. These are the business of the scientist. But since the doctrine of evolution is now accepted by those most competent to express an opinion, it becomes the business of the man of faith to re-examine his world from this new vantage ground, and to see what new insights faith may achieve because this ground has been occupied.

Real advances in scientific knowledge are always in the nature of an approach toward a clearer understanding of the truth. None of them are final, but they are approaches; they are the clearest indications that are available at the present time of what is finally true. Our situation is akin to that of the astronomer who has just received a new and better telescope. He can see more of the heavens than ever before, and so may have to adjust some of his earlier ideas. If he gets a still better telescope tomorrow, then he will see even more clearly, and will have to make still more adjustments. But they are all adjustments toward the truth; they are all approaches to reality;

they all make for a better understanding of God at work. Unless we are prepared to believe in advance that the scientific doctrine of evolution is a cosmic error, we should therefore approach with eager expectancy the clearer visions of truth to which the scientists are leading us, and especially those visions which have been confirmed rather than denied by later explorations. Certainly we ought not to approach the opening vista of scientific knowledge with suspicion, and much less with fear. We are concerned only to know the truth, and it is part of our faith to feel a prior certainty that there is no real truth which does not in time point to God.

Despite the foregoing, I am not anxious to appear as the protagonist of the theory of evolution. The scientists have done that, and obviously this is not the place for any lengthy excursion into scientific realms. My concern is rather that the faith of some has been disturbed by hangovers from old conflicts concerning evolution; and I would like to make it quite clear that those conflicts belong to a past which is only important in the sense that the past which included the Civil War is important. The battle is going forward on a different front today. Few informed persons think today that belief in evolution is incompatible with belief in God; or that the doctrine of evolution is a device to exclude God from the world which he has created; or that evolution blots out the image of God in the souls of men.

Strange as it may appear to some of us, the really bitter conflicts over the doctrine of evolution have not been between men of science and men of faith, but between champions of the older and the newer views of science. The religious leaders who became involved were camp followers rather than generals in the battle. Darwin, for example, the champion of evolution, was arrayed against Owen, who was a very great naturalist and the champion of scientific orthodoxy. The idea of the fixity of species which the exponents of the older scientific views were defending, moreover, was not an essentially religious idea. It had first been formulated by John Ray, the founder of modern zoology, about two hundred years previously. All things considered, it is a pity that the churchmen became involved before

they had had time to think things through quietly; and it is also a pity that so many of the scientists displayed such unscientific anger about matters which after all have to be decided on the basis of facts rather than on the basis of passion.

As we look back over the history of human thought, it is interesting to remember that the idea of evolution did not emerge with Darwin's theories. It is older by far than the Christian era. The Greeks did not have our modern insight into the ways of nature; nevertheless such men as Anaximander and Empedocles and Aristotle seem to recognize both the continuity observable in nature and something of the processes which have given rise to organic change. Augustine, one of the most illustrious of the Christian Fathers, had also propounded the view that in the beginning God created only the germs or original causes of the varied forms of life, and that these were afterward developed gradually. Indeed, it has been suggested that if the doctrine of evolution along the general lines followed by Darwin had been explained about fourteen hundred years earlier, it would have avoided conflict with the idea of the fixity of species and so would have received much more ready acceptance.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of this speculation, it is clear that there is no inseparable relation between religion and the older scientific theories. After all, the truths on which faith is built are not radically different if they are expressed in modern English or in the language of the Hottentots, and they are not radically changed if they are expressed against the background of today instead of against the background of two hundred years ago. Evolution does not deal with ultimate facts, but only with observable procedures. The fact that with His help we seem to have found out some of the ways in which God works, is no real reason for ceasing to believe that God is.

No one is going to be saved or lost by reason of his acceptance or rejection of the doctrine of evolution. But it seems to me that just as the English language does enable its user to express himself more fully than the language of some backward race, so the language of the modern scientist does help us to see more clearly than ever

before the majesty of God at work now. When we begin to comprehend the vast and continuous development from a few lower and simpler forms of life into the high and complex forms of life which we now know, something of the grandeur of the mind and heart which directs this cosmic evolution dawns on our own hearts and minds. The older evolutionists saw the facts most immediately available, and then framed their theory of the survival of the fittest. But we have now had time to think what this means, and we find it utterly inadequate to explain the very world which the scientists have helped us to see. There has been a power at work in the processes of evolution, a power which saw the end from the beginning, and which kept at work when the end was yet a long way off, making innumerable balancing adjustments at every step of the way. What sublime artistry was that—and what sublime courage, too. Here was no sudden appearance of the finished product out of an original vacuum. Here was rather the gradual shaping of a universe in which every part is marvelously adjusted to every other part; and we begin to realize what this means when we consider that the seventeen thousand tubes in the compound lens of a butterfly's eye are formed and developed in each insect by a co-operative process which defies description. Is it believable that the One who wrought us as the crown of his creation will now lose patience with us and cast us away as the potter casts away the clay which does not fit readily to his hand?

It is the glory of our humanity that we have been called into partnership in the evolutionary process. We share with God the responsibility for determining the race that shall yet be; and the fact that new orders of life can be brought into being is even now being impressed on us as practical evolutionists co-operate with God to make new plants and insects and animals. Dr. C. B. Davenport, Director of the Station for Experimental Evolution of Cold Springs Harbor, Long Island, has said:

"There are now thousands of forms of animals and plants that reproduce their kind which did not exist a century ago. Within  
G. O. H.—4



the last ten years there have been produced scores of forms of the banana fly never before seen by the eye of man. Indeed, the very day on which the ancestors of some of the new types first appeared is known, and many of these types have persisted to the present day."<sup>2</sup>

Many generations ago, our Heavenly Father invited Abraham and his children to join him in a corporate experiment in creation. The plan proposed called for the careful selection of mates within a limited but highly qualitative stock. It was not an enterprise on the purely physical plane, as has been advocated more recently by devotees of eugenics, but involved the cultivation of social and mental and spiritual qualities as well. Moreover, it was not competitive, but co-operative; not casual, but disciplined. The experiment fell far short of its possibilities, partly because the Jews insisted on marrying into less pure stock; but it achieved enough success down the years, and is supported by enough collateral evidence, to indicate some of the immense potentialities for good which is encompassed. It is still available for any people who are willing to co-operate with God in advancing humanity one further step along the way which God has marked out. The future of any group of men and women depends primarily on the quality and character of its posterity, and this is jointly determined by men and by God in harmony with the law. Many of these laws we now know. They underlie the teachings of Jesus, and have a place in all truly great religious philosophy. They are conserved and made operative whenever men love the Lord their God with heart, might, mind, and strength, and their neighbors as themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> See Bishop Charles Gore in *Belief in God*, Penguin edition, pages 15-21.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from *Sermons of a Chemist*, by E. E. Slosson, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1925.

# WE CAN SEE GOD AT WORK

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## IN MUSIC

AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSE IS A great mystery; the mystery of the relation between cause and effect. Science can trace this sequence, but cannot explain it. To us, it is a constant miracle. We cannot say that a certain effect must follow a cause, but only that it has always done so under similar conditions. Nowhere is this eternal mystery of things more clearly illustrated than in the realm of music, which is the most subtle of the arts, for no one knows why a succession of ordered sounds varying in pitch and loudness and quality should do to the human spirit what music accomplishes. But we can share this mystery at any time. Here, to the seeing eye and to the listening ear, "the invisible things of God are known by the things which are made." Music enables us to see into the heart of things through the power of harmony.

Every sound which music knows is first found somewhere in nature. There are, moreover, many sounds which form a kind of natural music, such as the wind in the pine forest, the surf on the rocks, bird song, and the human voice itself. There is rhythm, too, in our breathing, in the tides and in the seasons, in the movements of the stars in their courses, and throughout the whole universe. In very truth "the morning stars sing together," and there is a veritable "music of the spheres." Johannes Kepler, the German astronomer, was probably the first to realize this. He used the clues given him by music to plot the courses of the planets:

"All that the years discover point one way  
To this great ordered Harmony," he said,  
"Revealed on earth by music. Planets move  
In subtle accord like notes of one great song  
Audible only to the great Artificer,  
The Eternal Artist."<sup>1</sup>

By the aid of this hint, Newton and both William and Sir John Herschel made still further discoveries and joined in testimony that there is an infinite Composer and Conductor who both writes and directs the music to which the universe sings.

The best music that we know is but a faint echo of the heavenly song; yet our earthly music constitutes a universal language which speaks to every age and to every race. In good music heart and mind both are warmed and enlightened together. It is the most personal of the arts, for we react to the same music in widely diverse ways, each according to his own nature and experience. Yet music is also the most social of the arts. It overleaps our superficial differences and melts us together in moods and attitudes and common feelings which make us truly one. Think of what "Finlandia" has done for lovers of freedom, of what martial music will do for marching men, and of the renewal of hope and the surcease from pain which have come to the Negro people through their spirituals.

For those who have ears to hear and hearts to understand, music is a greater revealer of the nature of God and of the way in which Divinity works in our world. As we shall see elsewhere, it is difficult to glimpse what contribution pain and evil and despair have to make to the divine purpose in creation, despite the fact that we cannot build a world without them. But music illustrates some of the ways in which the supreme Composer may use even these disturbers to enhance the final victory. How could we have the triumphant joy of Beethoven without the tragic despair over which these very triumphs have taken place? Wagner created chords which were at first regarded as discords, but which often serve as steppingstones to some great and beautiful chord climax. He used the boisterous brass instruments to make the ear expectant so that the calm of the more orthodox harmonies would be welcomed with renewed joy. A seeming discord preceding a final passage adds considerably to the beauty and the soothing quality of the finale. Guided by great music, with what patient and yet eager expectancy we should look beyond all present clamor to the finale in which the great Conductor will resolve all discords, as he reveals the beauty of the universal score.

Free as it is, great music is as rigidly restricted by the laws of its own composition as is higher mathematics. Indeed there is a close relation between the two. Harmony in its higher forms is full of the spirit of discipline and obedience. "One chord leads to another along the road of freedom." Surely there is freedom here, freedom to create something new and beautiful and inspiring from what has been only a possibility before. Many of the great poets and philosophers have felt this deeply. Browning, for example, says:

"And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,  
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a  
star."<sup>2</sup>

One of the most important of musical forms is the fuge. The fuge gets its name from the Latin verb *fugare* which means "to put to flight" and from which we get our English word "fugitive." The fuge is so named because one part after another seems, as it were, to chase the subject or motive throughout the piece. Alfred Noyes likens the fuges to the wanderings of free spirits, and points out that great music makes sure, by its own laws, that the Composer's will shall eventually be done; but that it does so in infinitely subtle ways. Each fuge lives after its own nature, making itself heard as a man makes himself heard in his own community, affecting the community and being in turn affected by it, but being encompassed all the time by the love and skill and genius of the divine artist who has the whole movement in mind, and who directs what he creates rather than being directed by it.

It is easy for us to fall into ways of thought and action which seem to imply that the only stability in life is in the things which can be seen and felt. We talk of the "tangible realities" as though the only real things are tangible. Yet men of insight have always delighted in music, because there mathematical obedience to law is associated with creative freedom of expression. That is why music is sometimes called "liquid architecture." It has proportion and balance and freedom and beauty and power. It illustrates the reality of the things of the spirit, and the fact that the beauties of righteousness result from harmonies

built into the very laws of life. There is neither beauty nor real power in a life which does not also show forth proportion and balance and freedom and harmony.

When the Apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthian saints, he used parallels taken from the human body to impress the need for unity.<sup>3</sup> Any modern Paul who had cause to write to any "musical Corinthians" would have another parallel ready to hand, for we have learned now that in good music, perfection depends on the proper relation of the weaker and dependent notes to those which are stronger and more dominant. All are necessary; but all in right relation to each other. Even the pauses are music in the making:

"Why else was the pause prolonged, but that singing might issue thence?

Why, rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized?"

Music can create and fire the spirit of man. This is especially true when it is wedded to poetry so as to carry over into a wider range of human experience. That is why hymns and national songs have played such an important part in religious and national history. Consider the part played by such hymns as "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" in relation to Lutheranism, "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues" in connection with early Methodism, and "In the Light" and "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet" in our own unfolding church life. Millions of men have never been nearer heaven or to each other than when singing together "Lead Kindly Light" or "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past," or even "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." What a vital part has been played in the French history of the past century and a half by the "Marseillaise," and what might yet be done for a new world by a great hymn of humanity gathering up both in its words and its martial chords the hopes and fears and pains and aspirations of mankind on the march to the city beautiful, the land of brotherhood and the kingdom of God?

It may be that our age is not yet ready to witness the grand concert of the nations; but we are at least ready for rehearsals. Now is the time for tuning our instruments, for conferring with the Con-

ductor, and for learning to play together under him. Each nation evidently has its part: strings, brass, woods, and even the percussion instruments. Every player must interpret the score according to his talent and his knowledge of the laws of the music of life, and under the guidance which makes for harmony. And as we approach perfection through skill and understanding and harmony, the music of the universe shall be expressed in our singing.

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Noyes in *Watchers of the Sky*. <sup>2</sup> "Abt Vogler," by Browning. <sup>3</sup> I Corinthians 12: 14-31. <sup>4</sup> "Abt Vogler," by Browning.

## WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

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### HE IS HOLY

WHEN WE ARE ESPECIALLY AWARE of God, whether in the experience of worship or when we are startled by some new glimpse of beauty or goodness, we feel that despite our unusual spiritual alertness there is a great distance between us and Divinity. When we are with great men we may be filled with admiration, yet we are never unaware that these great ones are still just men; but when we feel the presence of Divinity we know that here is Someone who is more than human. We cry out with Moses, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord . . . glorious in holiness." Here, as nowhere else, we feel an instinctive sense of awe, and prostrate ourselves in tribute to a majesty which men can never attain. Indeed, this sense of the matchless grandeur of Divinity is so commanding that we feel we have fallen short of our own best possibilities if we do not recognize and pay tribute to it. A man may still be of some consequence, even though he fails to recognize the pre-eminence in their several fields of Shakespeare and Michelangelo and Mozart and Newton; but he can claim no real moral dignity unless he bows in reverence before the unshakable moral excellence of Divinity.

The excellence which we instinctively recognize in Divinity is essentially a matter of character. God is so unfailingly good that just to be near him impresses even the noblest of men with a sense of his own unworthiness. Thus Isaiah says, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up . . . then said I, Woe is me! for . . . I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts."<sup>1</sup> This divine goodness, this holiness, which is the most significant difference between men and God, is not to be found in any one of the attributes of Divinity but in the character of Divinity taken as a

whole. The blazing purity of the nature of God absorbs and fuses every other aspect of life, very much as white light gathers up into itself all the varied colors of the spectrum.

The holiness of Divinity is a potent moral force making for righteousness. Just as an honest man must express himself in certain situations if he is to retain his self-respect, so God always asserts his power in defense of good and in opposition to evil. He does this without "variableness, neither shadow of turning,"<sup>2</sup> as an expression of his own essential character. From eternity to eternity he is the same. He never compromises with evil; and even when he might appear to be sanctioning evil by refusing to interfere with the agency of a wicked man, he is really condemning that evil by striving to make men abandon it of their own free will.

It is difficult to realize the passion which flames at the heart of holiness; for when we reflect on the vast resources available to Divinity, it is easy to think of God enthroned in splendor and accomplishing all things by the word of his power, a sort of celestial efficiency expert who has all things so completely under control that there is no need for him to concern himself with details, much less to weep over the shortcomings of the day laborers. But any theoretical possibility of such dispassionate expertness vanished when God made us and made us free. Because he is holy, he loves us; but for the very reason that he is holy, he can neither ignore our shortcomings nor condone our wickedness. Instead of being like an efficiency expert, he is much more like a member of the school board in a family community; he must dismiss bad and inefficient teachers, no matter how deep his regard for them may be; but he goes out of his way to help them conquer their deficiencies in order that he may have the joy of reappointing them, while they find places of pleasant and effective service in the community.

The Hebrew letter says that "Our God is a consuming fire." Surely this is right. How can we think of God as living purity, unless we also think of him as constantly at war with impurity. The furnace fire which brings life to the gold, by that very fact brings death to the dross. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall



see God." But it is not a passive purity which forms the background for the vision splendid; rather it is a flaming zeal for purity which cannot rest so long as impurity flourishes anywhere, and which therefore makes a crusader out of every man who is possessed by it.

The Apostle John felt that it was the privilege and obligation of the saints to judge all of life in terms of the living holiness displayed in the life of Jesus, whose life is the light of men. Jesus has shown in living drama what are the demands and what are the resources of holiness; it was out of his own experience with the Master that John later wrote, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." It is for this reason that I find myself preferring to use the term, "Holy Spirit," rather than the parallel term, "Spirit of God," in reference to God at work in the world today. All the love and wisdom and justice and mercy of Divinity now or ever exercised toward humanity is an expression of his holiness and is directed toward the achievement of holiness in us.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." Never before had the ideas of sovereignty and deep affection been so simply and yet so effectively united. God is at once the Lord of Life, the center and source of all authority and judgment, and the Father who watches over each one of us with devoted care. I remember reading of an incident which occurred immediately after the death of King George V, of England. The Lord Chamberlain announced the king's death in the usual formula, "The king is dead: Long live the king." Immediately Mary, the Princess Royal and sister of the new king, curtsied to her brother. Then, reaching forward impulsively, she kissed him. She was well aware that her affection for the king must not rob him of the homage which was his due, but she also knew that true kingship was no bar to that affection. So, also, the Master has taught us that we should approach the throne of God with reverent awe, movingly aware of the distinctive sovereignty of Divinity, whose name is holy and whose purpose is eternal, but whose love is unfailing.

The further teachings of Jesus maintain this high conception of the nature of God. The name of God is to be hallowed; his will is to be

done; his reign is to be the consummation of all things. Moreover, Jesus not only taught men about God by word of mouth, he was God in the flesh, the living embodiment of what God is and does. We shall do well to remember, therefore, that while the Master spoke with unvarying kindness to the poor and unfortunate, he also spoke with the utmost severity to hypocrites and oppressors, warning them of the wrath to come. There was holiness in this attitude and this denunciation just as there was holiness in his kindness and his invitation. The God who was manifest in the person of his son, Jesus Christ, was at once stern and understanding, just and merciful, unyielding and yet warmly affectionate. While there is joy in heaven over sinners who repent, and anguish over those who reject the counsel of God against themselves, there is no hint of any abatement of the fixed law that only repentance can open the door to forgiveness.

Because God is holy, the only fitting approach to him is by way of worship. Our steadily growing conviction of his greatness and of his power must be nourished here, and out of this must come our advancing understanding of his purpose and our free and willing submission to his will. Worship feeds the soul, as high converse feeds the mind and heart. Without it religion degenerates into mere morality, and noble living loses its greatest dynamic. Because we are made for high communion with Divinity, we miss our destiny if we fail to shape our lives by the light of that communion.

Our partnership with God is a very junior partnership. This is partly due to the poverty of our understanding, for God could use us to much better advantage if we would learn to be more adept in thinking his thoughts after him. But it is even more directly due to our total character deficiencies; we lack that balanced righteousness which is so characteristic of God. In all our work with him and for him, therefore, and in all our faithful yearnings toward the better tomorrow, the cultivation of holiness through soul-searching worship must have a vital place. There is no truly effective work without worship.

## WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

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### HE IS JUST

ONE OF THE MOST HOPEFUL THINGS ABOUT us is our instinctive reaction against injustice. Without argument, and out of the deepest recesses of our beings, we resent unfairness and feel that it ought to be opposed. This being so, it is impossible for a thoughtful man to have faith in God unless he believes in his heart that God is above playing favorites. Faith in God is a great moral force; and it rests on confident trust that God will play the game of life according to the rules which he himself has laid down. If we felt that the Creator of all things was capable of injustice we might know him to be able, but we could never feel that he was good. Despite the misunderstanding of the past, we have now arrived at a point in our advanced understanding where we know that justice is as fundamental a characteristic of Divinity as love or mercy or truth.

Not many of us think very clearly about this matter of justice, but we feel very deeply about it. Our basic feeling is that the right to fair treatment is an inalienable right belonging to a man because he is a man. It seems to us to be right, and it is right, that the laws of life shall operate with a certain fine impartiality. We think it is in the nature of things that a hot stove shall burn the hand of any man who touches it, and we take it for granted that a typhus germ will not bother to ask the name and pedigree of a careless man before it moves in to live with him. Out of these experiences we make certain rules for the successful conduct of life and say that all men must be careful when they are near hot stoves, and that all men must be clean if they are not to entertain strange germs unaware.

We are so impressed with this idea of impartiality that we try to carry it over into our social relationships, and there to set up laws which apply with equal weight to all men. Our favorite picture of

justice is a figure with bandaged eyes, hence unmoved by appearances and having in her hand a pair of scales with which penalties can be exactly set off against offenses. But not all of life can be adjusted thus finely. A winter in jail might be a relief to an ailing and friendless and poverty stricken migrant. Or it might be a way of life to a gangster "on the run" from his underworld enemies. Or it might be worse than death to a weak but well-intentioned man to whom freedom was the breath of life, yet who had been overcome by temptation and then found out.

If justice is to be truly impartial, she must take off her bandages. There has been in the present generation a tendency in that direction; but when she finally throws them away, it is not unlikely that there will be what the reporters call a "great sensation in court," for it may well be that she will then call some of the highly esteemed people of the community to take their places in the dock along with the accused. Justice, with her eyes opened, will in all probability be something of a world figure. Custom and tradition and society itself may come in for judgment. Nations may be found guilty of crimes which they have condemned in their own citizenry. Enlightened races may have to share responsibility with backward peoples. Laziness might be judged alongside theft, pride as a form of immorality, and undue aggressiveness as akin to cruelty. The bribe-taking politician and the rabble-rousing demagogue and the imperialistic diplomat might well stand trial together, and might afterwards find themselves working on the rock pile with the man who used his profession as a money-making device, and the minister who refused to countenance the marriage of light and truth.

If justice is to be truly impartial, she must get herself a new and much more sensitive set of scales. Who can use ordinary scales to determine exactly how many hours of torment can expiate an act of cruelty, or how heavy a fine can pay for blindness to the rights of the innocent bystander? What measure can indicate how we shall recompense the innocent, and what is the antidote for the shame felt by a good man when a loved one acts shamefully? It is not just that these things shall be forgotten. It is not right that they shall be

omitted from the scale. And yet who can exercise righteous judgment? Can anyone but the Creator who brought the highest law into being dispense this kind of justice?

There are two possible approaches to the administration of justice. One of them looks backward, and endeavors to balance every wrong done with a suitable punishment and every right with an adequate reward. As we have already seen, this is much more difficult to do than at first appears. Life is so complex, and responsibility is so far-reaching, that the wisdom of Solomon would be needed to mete out just punishment in the simplest possible situations. God himself cannot change yesterday so as to undo completely what has been done, and anything short of this seems to be like locking the airdrome after the plane has been stolen.

The alternative approach looks forward, and endeavors to unite every party to an injustice to correct wrongs which have been done and to build safeguards against their recurrence. There are at least three parties to every injustice: the wrongdoer, the immediate sufferer, and the more remote sufferers. Forward-looking justice is concerned with each of these. It seeks to convert the wrongdoer so that he wants to make restitution; to help the sufferer by restoring to him what can be salvaged and by saving him from bitterness; and to awaken the bystander by rescuing him from indifference to an awareness of his involvement. This approach does not deny or minimize the seriousness of whatever wrong has been committed; but it does affirm the importance of tomorrow as against yesterday, and of constructiveness as against revenge.

God is just; and he has adopted and combined the best in each of these possible approaches to the practice of justice. He has decreed for every man, no matter what his rank or station, that he shall live by the choices he makes. Neither money nor influence nor subterfuge can alter this law. By virtue of this decree, which is written into the very nature of the universe, his yesterdays still live in every man. The evil which a man does deforms him so that, unless the Divine Healer shall touch him, he must ever afterwards bear that deformity and be limited by it. The good which a man does

enriches him, so that, unless he shall thereafter waste his substance, he can forever afterward see more clearly and live more nobly than would have been possible otherwise. The fact that some wicked men cannot see their limitations does not deny these limitations, any more than another man's blindness denies the fact of beauty. And the fact that some good men seem to be called on to suffer does not alter the fact that their lives are enriched by their suffering, just as the value of a prize is augmented by the struggle preceding victory.

But for the very reason that God is just, he will not permit the tomorrows to be dominated by the yesterdays. To shackle a man today because he was a criminal yesterday is to let actualities dominate possibilities. To do this is to let what he has been destroy what he might yet be; and this is not just to the man involved, nor to the person he has injured, nor to the society he might have enriched. It is a policy of defeatism. It says that rather than take the risk of repetition of the bad, I will throw away all chance of the good. The more we think about it, the less like God such a procedure appears.

In order to reconcile the law, which says that what a man sows that shall he also reap, with the further law which says that what a man has been shall not necessarily kill what he might have been, God has offered all men the chance for a new start in life whenever they really want it. He says that there is no purpose in remembering yesterday against a man if that man can be persuaded to hate what he then was and to change his entire way of living. He says, moreover, that in order to offset the power of yesterday's evil which still lingers in a man's mind and body, he will give a new experience of forgiveness, and a new sense of divine acceptance, and a new call to partnership in a great task.

Those whose ideas of justice turn backward find it hard to feel that it was right for the father to receive the prodigal son into the family circle after the son had wasted his portion of the family estate in riotous living. The son himself felt that reinstatement was too much to ask, and in this at least the older son agreed with his brother. Indeed reinstatement would have been foolish and unwarranted except for one thing, which was that this was not the same young man who

had gone to the far country. The prodigal had learned by the things which he had suffered, and he was not asking for the place he might have occupied. All he wanted was to be at home, within the circle of his father's love. But the warmth of his welcome, which refused to remember a past which was already dead, worked a still further miracle in him. Now he saw for the first time how utterly foolish he had been to go away at all, and how utterly criminal, too. Such a father as his did not deserve such treatment. Cut to the heart by his first insight into his own character, the prodigal now wanted to do all he could to undo the harm he had done. Having been forgiven much, he now loved much. The passion of his repentance made his new life at home the best chance that life could offer for him to recoup all that had been lost by his dereliction; if only his brother would receive him as his father had done, bitterness could be forgotten, losses could be recouped, and love could rise higher than ever before.

This great truth was expressed by Paul in terms of Roman legalism, when he said that men who truly have faith in God are therefore treated as though they were just.<sup>1</sup> It is the bedrock of Luther's message to his own and all subsequent generations. It says to the wicked man who might otherwise be afraid to make the venture: "Sin is a terrible thing. No one can shut his eyes to that. It has left its mark on you and on those you have wronged. But the worst punishment for your sinning was to condemn you to be the kind of man you had chosen to be; and now you have chosen to be different. That is splendid. Now, without recrimination, but also without forgetting what your sin has cost, we will work together to build a new life; we will carry the load of yesterday willingly, and we will find ways of making even this handicap serve good instead of evil. This is just to yesterday, and it is just to tomorrow. Come let us go forward toward the dawn."

An interesting modern illustration of the power of this constructive procedure can be drawn from the field of psychiatry. No one is more logical than a man suffering from a mental disorder. It is quite useless to argue with him, for if you do, he will start round

a great circle of discussion, and with each trip the lines of his aberration are worn deeper and deeper. He cannot think himself out of his dilemma, for his very sickness lies right there. His mind moves logically enough, but it is unhealthy and diseased. There is only one hope for him, and that is that he shall be persuaded to abandon his own way of living in confident trust that his doctor knows and can point out the way toward life and health. The psychologist goes to work on this frank assumption; and if he can break the connection with yesterday he succeeds. When he does, the newly-well patient is in a position to undo some of the ill done during his sickness. Unless he succeeds, the patient continues insane; and no attempt to readjust the past can save him.

As society is at present constituted, much of our so-called justice is merely abstinence from the ranker forms of injustice. If we are to stand with God, we must look forward with him and give due weight to the possibilities hidden in the most unworthy men. To do this intelligently we shall have to face the facts of life squarely; but if we introduce the fact of the love of God and couple with it our own love for our fellows, we begin to build a new world—and the world of the blind goddess gives place to a world of creative justice.

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 5.



## WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

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### HE IS COMPASSIONATE

TO LAUNCH MAN ON THE SEA OF LIFE possessed of the knowledge of good and evil was a tremendous adventure, not alone for man, but for God, too. In doing so, God undertook an infinite obligation to care for humanity. Ever since he set them afloat, men have been his responsibility, and God never shirks his responsibilities. Moreover, God knew that this responsibility would be costly. It was because he realized that the salvation of mankind called for the beginning for the utmost in sacrifice that John called Jesus the "Lamb slain from the foundations of the world."

The reason prompting God to undertake such a tremendous and far-reaching responsibility was consistent with the divine nature; he did it because he is that kind of person. It is unthinkable that we were created in a moment of abstraction and then left to ourselves; and the evidence is all against any such theory. It would be cruel, and in no sense divine, to launch such creatures as men are and then to leave them to drift and to suffer. Nor were we created for his own enjoyment, or for the satisfaction which such an intricate achievement would bring him, and for no other purpose. A man may not have any obligation to a chair which he makes, though he may take just pride in its construction; but he certainly has obligations to the children he begets, no matter how faulty their design and behavior may seem to be. God, too, has obligations which arise from the very fact that we are the kind of creatures that we are; and he could not cast us off and remain true to the demands of his own greatness.

Of all the conceivable reasons prompting Divinity toward the creation of mankind, the only one which stands up under scrutiny is that God was in love with a dream. He brought us into being for our sakes and for his sake; because man as he is intended to be is an

intrinsically worth-while creation, and because he could love man from the beginning both for what he is and for what he may become. He is a Father who enjoys his children as they grow up and yet looks forward with eager anticipation to the time when they will be mature enough to share all of life with him. He therefore gladly accepts responsibility for our existence. Yet he will not demand that since he is responsible he must be obeyed blindly. He cared too much for the stalwart maturity which he intends us to achieve to intrude into our lives without invitation. To break into our development before we have sent roots down into the reality of things would be as bad as pulling up the potatoes in a victory garden to see how they are growing. Instead, God sends his sun and rain, and lets us grow. His restraint is one of many evidences of his love.

In view of the depth of the divine interest in mankind, it is hardly to be wondered at that we tend to stress love as the characteristic attribute of Divinity, especially since the love revealed in the life of Jesus has been such a strong creative force in the lives of so many. But the love of God, which built a world suited to our needs, set us in our rightful places therein, and then directed us in our progress toward full maturity is evidently no mere sentiment. If it had been, it would have balked at the challenge of sin; for sin is a problem which only real and enduring love can solve. The love of God is at once realistic and farsighted. It is the love of an infinitely wise and generous-hearted father. It provides and understands and chides and encourages and endures and hopes and trusts. Above all, it is graciously compassionate. We are not awed by the greatness of Divinity because it is paraded before us, but because it is laid aside for our sake; not because it is stated, but because it is manifested toward us; not because it is demanding, but because it is expressed in love for the sinful and the unfortunate.

The wonderful love of God is made especially evident at two points: that God made us in the first place, and that he has refused to cast us off in spite of our many wanderings and rebellions. The two are not distinct and separate from each other, but are both manifestations of the fundamental nature of Divinity. God not only made

men but he has given evidence of his love for them in the nature of his creation. God not only loves—he *is* love. Where love it, God is; where love is not, God is not. Whatever relations God has with his lost or rebellious children, therefore, are grounded in wise and compassionate concern for their immediate and ultimate well-being. He not only makes his sun to shine on both the just and the unjust, but he sends his Son to seek and to save all of sinful mankind who can be persuaded to acknowledge their dire need of him.

Compassion is also apparent in the effort that God makes to teach the lessons of life in terms which are within the range of human understanding. Great art, great drama, great music, great literature, great philosophy, and every other great experience of mankind point to the way of life. But it is not only here that God and his way of life are to be found. There is no experience, however small or sordid, but what has been used or can be used as a means of approach and of revelation. God has not even stood off from our sin; but has put his own suffering alongside the worst of it and so has awakened us to shame and contrition. He has not abandoned us even in the days of judgment which we have known; but even as the coming of a war makes clear the true nature of the years which went before, his voice has called us once again to repentance and hope.

Today our very self-sufficiency is a challenge to the compassionate love of God. It is so easy to confuse additional knowledge with additional maturity, and to think that because we have traveled a little farther along the highway of life that we are therefore the lords of life itself. Only God knows how little we do know, and how distorted is our sense of the importance of what we have discovered. When we are confronted with the immensities of life, we are just as fearful as our ancestors were when confronted with the immensities of their day. Whatever may have happened to our heads, our hearts are not any more stalwart than the hearts of the men of old.

In Thomas Hardy's *Two on a Tower*, a young astronomer says: "The imaginary picture of the sky as the concavity of a dome whose base extends from horizon to horizon of our earth is grand, simply grand,

and I wish I had never got beyond looking at it that way. But the actual sky is a horror. There is a size at which dignity begins; further on there is a size at which grandeur begins; further on there is a size at which solemnity begins; further on a size at which awfulness begins; further on a size at which ghastliness begins. That size faintly approaches the size of the stellar universe." Actually, there is no room for awfulness, much less for ghastliness, in a universe which is fashioned by Divinity and over which the Spirit of God broods in benediction. With what loving compassion God must look on any young man whose learning has only served to accentuate his loneliness.

The very majesty of Divinity has served to blind some men to the wonder of divine compassion. Yet there is no true greatness which does not also include great love and great understanding and great sympathy. During the visit of King George and Queen Elizabeth to Canada a few years ago, I remember how deeply I was impressed by the way their majesties won men and women who were proud of their independence and who had little sympathy with any abstract idea of monarchy. On every side I heard persons of this type commenting on the kindliness of the king and the graciousness of the queen; and for the first time I sensed the meaning behind the titles, "His Gracious Majesty," and "Her Gracious Majesty." Those who were honored by their majesties felt especially honored, and those who were pardoned felt especially grateful because of this graciousness. And as I realized this my mind leaped to the thought of those who have been honored and those who have been pardoned by the matchless grace of God—who have been sought out by his love, and pursued down the years by his benediction, and won at last by his compassion.

The song of all the redeemed from the remotest ages of the past is that we love him because he first loved us. This is still our song. But surely the unmeasured love of God should do more than make us grateful. It lays on us obligations which are the more urgent because they are the obligations of love. We cannot really understand the compassion with which Jesus looked at his countrymen until we have felt this compassion stirring our own hearts to sympathy and affection.

In a day which has seen hatred let loose on the world like a flood, and in which millions feel that they have just cause to demand revenge, only God can rightfully plead with us to be merciful; only the Son of God dares to remind us that "they know not what they do." Yet revenge and hatred have no promise for us. If the oppressors are all driven into the sea, that will not end oppression. The great lack of humanity is that they are as sheep without a shepherd. Their only hope is that the practice of intelligent love will win them to the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls—His Most Gracious Majesty, God, the Compassionate Lover of all mankind.

## WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

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### HE IS INTELLIGENT

WE GENERALLY DETERMINE OUR ATTITUDE toward God on the basis of our feelings. This is all right as far as it goes; nevertheless, we need to reinforce and correct attitudes which are determined in this way by clear thinking about God. When we think carefully and persistently about the nature and purpose of Divinity, we achieve at the same time a clearer idea of what God rightfully demands of us. If my idea of God is so childish or so narrow that it raises more difficulties than it solves, then the very fact of thinking seriously about God will do two things for me: it will lead me toward better understanding, and it will lead me toward more responsive life. If, on the other hand, my idea of God helps me to meet the demands of life, then the very fact of thinking about Divinity will tend to add to my powers for living.

In the nature of things, all our thinking about God must be tentative. Since God is so much greater than we are, our thinking about him does not reveal the fullness of his nature to us. We can learn something of the directions in which his greatness lies, but we cannot learn how far his greatness extends in any direction. And, of course, there are some elements of the greatness of God which we do not even suspect. But all of this is also true in relation to our fellow men. We never know each other fully; there is always something about any person which completely eludes the scrutiny of another. Yet it is a truly valuable experience to analyze the character of a great and good man as his biographer might do, for to accomplish this successfully we have to share something of his spirit and purpose. In much the same way, devout thought about God leads us almost inevitably into an attempt to respond to his majesty.

One of the first things which arrests our attention, when we con-

sider the evidences of Divinity all around us, is the superlative intelligence there displayed. The order and variety and beauty of the world with which we are in daily contact bear unfailing testimony to this supervising wisdom; and the force of such testimony is multiplied as we learn more and more about this world, and yet manage to retain our sense of wonder. Sometimes we are astonished by the majestic sweep of the universe of which we catch a glimpse when we search the heavens with the aid of a giant telescope. At other times our amazement is stirred by the complex and finely adjusted mechanisms working constantly in trees and plants, and the thousands of unbelievably perfect co-ordinations manifest in the colonial life of the insect world and in the bodies of the higher animals. Wherever we look with understanding eyes, we find evidence of the skill and workmanlike competence of the One who brought all things into being, and whose power sustains them in their places.

We feel rather than think about the beauties of plant and animal life. Yet the beauty which is revealed in the delicate architecture of a snowflake, or in the riotous glamour of a tropical garden, or in the infinitely minute and symmetrical branchings of a sparrow's feather, all proclaim the transcendent genius of their Creator. The perfect color harmonies, the balanced patterns, the wedding of form to function, and the myriad other excellencies which we can discover in Nature when we see her dressed for the changing seasons all grow out of a careful consideration of order and arrangement and of the mutual relationships of the parts to the wholes. These can only be blended in this creative fashion by intelligence which is truly divine. The direct creation of everything which exists would call for intelligence far greater than anything that we can measure. But the Creator of all things has gone much farther than this. He has endowed his varied creations with capacity for procreation, each after its own kind, and yet every newborn flower and animal and child unique among its fellows. When we reflect on the thought and care which go into the breeding of fine stock, and of the way in which intelligence and sympathy must guide in selecting strains which are desired, and in avoiding weaknesses which so frequently accompany these strains, we may

form a vague idea of the majestic intelligence which must be at work in a world where all living things are partners in creation, and yet where the whole of creation is kept in balance.

The endowment of living things shows a remarkable adaptation of form to function, and behind this is clear indication of directing intelligence. There was a time when scientists thought that this adaptation was a blind achievement of nature. They believed that only those species had survived which proved capable of adapting themselves; and that the abilities which enabled them to make this adaptation had been emphasized and carried forward by natural forces. However, this theory does not explain many of the facts of science, such as the fact that many organs which we now find useful were not useful in the intermediate stages of their development; but these organs nevertheless appeared and passed through the rudimentary stages of their development and in time were available to satisfy needs which were not apparent when the process began.

The defense mechanisms of plants and animals have always seemed to me to indicate the existence of a supervising intelligence which is humorous as well as keen. There is an infinite variety of these mechanisms, and each is apparently related to the nature and the other needs of the animal in which it is found. The lion has strength; the eagle and the hawk have wings and claws; the rabbit has speed and cunning and protective coloring; the turtle and the clam and the oyster have hard shells and a patient disposition; the ptarmigan has plumage which changes from brown to white as the summer gives way to fall and to winter; the skunk has an offensive smell; the porcupine has quills; the rattlesnake has poisonous fangs; the lobster has pincers; the bee has a sting; the ant finds safety in numbers; and as the list grows so does the fitting nature of each system of defense become more apparent. The peculiar protective apparatus of the skunk, for example, enables him to go his own sweet way without any endowment for speedy escape, or for vicious counterattack, or for retreat into his shell; and this means that he does not need to have especially developed leg muscles, or to be bigger and stronger than his enemies, or to carry his armor like a tank, or to have a mean dis-



position, or to be anything other than just a plain friendly skunk. Nor was there a time when the chief skunk called his family around him and they jointly resolved to be that way from that time forward. Skunks do not get that way that way. The nature of the beast was determined for him by a superior and intensely practical wisdom which existed before the first skunk won his first victory, and this wisdom fitted him into the total scheme of things with an adequacy which we cannot match anywhere outside of the created order.

As we have already seen, the divine intelligence is most fully revealed in the divine plan for human well-being. By nature we are built for partnership with God. Unfortunately, we have lost our way; and unfortunately also any attempt to force us back against our will would destroy the very purpose of our creation by making us marionettes instead of men. But he who first brought us into being and who has since dazzled our eyes with glimpses of our possible greatness, has not been defeated by our seeming defection. Instead he has surrounded us with all sorts of inducements to repentance and to righteousness; and in a thousand and one ways he pleads for our free partnership with him in the further work of creation. The divine plan for human redemption has much more to commend it than its wisdom; but on this plane alone its divinity is abundantly demonstrated. We can conceive of no better way than God's way of doing in men what God desires to have done. No matter how glibly we may excuse ourselves for living sub-Christian lives, the one quality which we demand in those who would lead us is integrity; and this is a fundamental Christian virtue. The most scathing denunciations of Jesus were not reserved for flagrantly wicked men, but for hypocrites, play-actors who pretended to be what they were not, men who lacked spiritual integrity.

Having in mind, then, the intelligence of Divinity, may we not be quite certain that our Father sees through each and all of the many subterfuges which we employ to avoid co-operating in the one thing in which God is really concerned? We may and do deceive ourselves, but we do not deceive him. The prayers of the righteous man avail much, because the righteous man seeks to discover the will of God

and to gain strength to obey the will of God; and because such a man gives weight to his prayers with his life. But unrighteousness in the prayers of any man is ineffective with God, no matter who that man might be. God does not play favorites. He does not abate the conditions of eternal life because a friend asks him to do so. He does not give the rewards of skillful work to a man who praises God instead of asking for guidance as he seeks to do his part. Contributions to charity cannot blind Divinity to the way money has been made or, for that matter, to the fact that what was not contributed has been used selfishly. The patriotic fervor of a devout German Christian cannot persuade God to smile on the corrupt ambition of the German nation; nor can his general approval of the trends of democracy cause him to condone political graft in the United States, or exploitation of the underprivileged in England, or race prejudice in Australia. Sincerity is no adequate substitute for rightness, nor prosperity for goodness, nor belonging to a chosen people for choosing to do God's will. The way to secure the greatest possible guaranty of divine guidance and blessing is to check frequently with Divinity so as to be as sure as possible that we are actually seeking to do his will.

In view of the manifest wisdom of God, moreover, it seems reasonable to permit him to fight those battles which must be fought and which we cannot fight for ourselves. One with God should be victorious; whenever one with God is not a conqueror, the fault lies with us because we insist on trying to carry more than our share of the load and because we refuse to let him carry what he would be glad to carry for us. God is the real strength behind every good cause; his is the real support beneath every heavy load. Having done all that we can, is it not divinely wise that we shall then rest our cause with the One who can safeguard it, and the only one who can guarantee to do so? What anxiety and distress could be avoided, and what strength could be saved for service, if we could only remember that He who is for us is greater than all those who are against us!

And, finally, is it not reasonable for us to trust the guidance of Divinity when once we see the way even though we cannot see the end? His wisdom has been vindicated so many times that a great



## WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

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### HE IS UNCOMPROMISING

WE ARE ACCUSTOMED TO THINKING OF the warmth of divine love. Prophets and poets have sung of this love right through the ages, and Christians have treasured it as their richest experience; yet it is well for us to realize that God is also sternly uncompromising. Both warm affection and stern discipline are aspects of the same divine character; and both are reasons for faith.

In an earlier day men used to believe that in the beginning of time God brought the world into being by the power of his word, and that ever since that time he has achieved his ends with effortless ease whenever he cared to intervene in the affairs of mankind. But this is not so. When our Heavenly Father endowed man with agency, he thereby limited himself. From that time forward he could not force men to do his will, but at best could only persuade them. Some men might be openly rebellious. Others might act as though God does not exist. Still others might profess to love him, but might actually wander in such blind ignorance that they seem to hinder more than they help. Under all these conditions God has forever fore-sworn coercion. He will do his utmost to tempt men upward, but he will not force them upward. And no matter what happens, he will not abandon his task of world-building and kingdom-building.

This decision to build in us and with us and for us and yet not to force our compliance, has placed a heavy burden on the Creator. If ever we are inclined to think that the way of Divinity is an easy way, we have only to look at Calvary and to realize that we crucify God anew whenever we resist his efforts in us, just as men like us crucified him in the person of his Son two thousand years ago. What happened at Calvary was not an isolated incident. It is a dramatic picture of what is constantly happening. Enoch and other holy men

of old knew this.<sup>1</sup> Whenever the love of God meets the willfulness of man, there love is crucified. Nevertheless, nothing deflates God from his purpose.

God is not concerned with making our kind of world; his purpose is to create his kind of world. In the long run this is our kind of world, too, but it is not the kind of world that we want now. We do not yet know enough to be sure what kind of world would be good for us. All around us are reputedly wise men who have achieved so-called "success" in life only to find that somehow they have missed the mark. Our range of interest is so narrow, our sympathies are so circumscribed, and our knowledge is so pitifully limited, that we cannot be trusted to plan our world without his guidance. For our own sakes, and because he loves us and those who are to come after us, he shares this task of world-building with us; but just because he does love us he is sternly uncompromising about what he is doing and about how he is doing it. God has great patience and subtlety, and it is amazing how frequently he brings good out of evil; but he has never yet sanctioned and promoted evil just because certain men have thought that it was good.

The world which is still being created has been richly endowed with resources which remain inert and without value until men develop and use them. God has done his part, and we find the materials which he has provided are strangely responsive to our study and our skill. Nevertheless these materials derive their importance from us. We give them significance by the use we make of them; it is this which gives them life and value; just as gold is valuable because we need such a metal and decided on gold out of the several possibilities. Strangely enough it is also true that we grow in strength and in inner quality as we learn to use the inanimate resources of the universe constructively and so to share with them something of our own thought and skill and life. Why this should be, we do not know. All that we can say is that the facts indicate this to be true. We grow in wisdom and understanding and power as we learn to work with each other in discovering and using the resources of the universe for the common good.

In our relations with the world around us, we have reason to be grateful that the Creator of all things is so rigidly uncompromising. He may and does bring into play higher laws than we yet understand, and so at times his activities seem to us to be miraculous. But there are no miracles with God. We may confidently expect that when we share his knowledge, we shall see that he never abrogates his own laws, any more than the aviator suspends the law of gravity in order to fly. It is this very reliability of natural law that enables us to build with assurance and to live with confidence.

It is fascinating to meditate on the way in which our affection for the things we work with is deepened as we come to understand the laws of their being. The expert carpenter or cabinetmaker gets to know his woods, and works with oak and walnut and pine so as to co-operate with them in their strength and to sustain them in their weakness. He does not try to force either into a place for which nature has not fitted it, nor to put on it burdens which it cannot bear. By this co-operating with the nature of things, he at last fashions objects both beautiful and useful, and when he has finished, he runs his hand and eye over them with the real and worthy pride of a creator.

The inexpert workman, on the other hand, sees all woods alike and takes no pains to know the nature of each piece with which he is privileged to work. Because of this he fails, and his materials are twisted and thwarted and broken, and this happens no matter how devout he may be or how earnestly he might pray that things shall work out right in the end. God blesses us in our work, but not by changing the nature of our materials or the laws underlying good workmanship. He blesses us by teaching us righteousness, right ways of acting. If we do not learn the right ways of acting with wood and stone and iron, then we are never blessed with the rewards which are given so freely to the fine workman in wood and stone and iron.

The same principle holds good in the relations of men with each other. All are alike and yet all are also different. In our likeness lies the basis for mutual understanding and in our differences lie the bases for mutual support. If we will, we can come to understand each other, for there is something akin to us in every man and some-

thing of every man in us. But if we fail to reckon with our differences and to respect and use them, we can never make a team.

To the people who bring observation and affection and practice and self-discipline to the task of working with their fellows, God grants the rich rewards of friendship and the joys of fine human relationship. But for those who work thoughtlessly against the grain of other personalities, or who expect from their fellows a response for which these other men are not fitted by nature, there is no reward but frustration and pain and loneliness.

All this is so because God will not change the laws of life to meet our limitations; but his refusal to changes does not center in any lack of affection for us, but in his wisdom and his love. Men must be able to trust God or they are lost; and the only way in which our Heavenly Father can prove his truthworthiness is by setting forth clear and sound principles as the basis on which he grants his favors, and which he himself honors. There is no wordly interest which has not at some time sought God as an ally. It is proverbial how urgently nations at war seek to enlist Divinity, and how fumbling churchmen have believed that through them God would build a new world despite their fumbling. But God does not play favorites. He shows his love for us, both by the inspiration which guides us in the right path, and by the chastisement which teaches us the error of our ways. Good men recognize and invite this when they close their prayers with the petition: "Nevertheless, not my will but thine, O Lord, be done."

Sincerity and honesty of purpose are so very necessary that we sometimes seem to overemphasize their value simply by failing to emphasize the equal importance of rightness. It may be a little difficult for us to face this fact squarely, particularly since it is so much easier to be sincere than it is to be right; but here is a lesson of profound significance for everyone of us. With complete honesty and sincerity and unselfishness, we may give our lives to defending a cause which we believe to be essential to the well-being of humanity. In so doing, we develop character which God will not permit to be lost, and which he will constantly endeavor to attach to causes that are truly worthy. But if the enterprise to which we give our lives is not truly

for the good of humanity, God will sternly reject it, and in time it will be swept away.

Our Heavenly Father shows his great love for us by the fact that he surrounds us with evidence of his deep affection; anyone less merciful would have abandoned us long ago. But he never shows mercy in such a way as to rob justice. He is quite determined when he says, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice"; and he is speaking the simple truth reinforced by the weight of the universe when he says, "Speak good and not evil that ye may live . . . Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." There is a place for tolerance and for the give and take of friendship; but to be tolerant about letting a child play with poison is wicked. In the moral realm this is particularly true, and God is the supreme champion of uncompromising moral insight. It was he who stood behind William Lloyd Garrison a hundred years ago when Garrison wrote concerning the slavery issue, "I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject I do not wish to speak or think or write with moderation . . . I will not equivocate, I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard."

There is a sense in which a good man may rightly feel that he has been blessed above all other men. But this blessing is not a gift of ease and security. It is a blessing that sends men out into the front line of battle wherever a moral principle is at stake. God does not make life easier by excluding us from the risks and pains and penalties which life involves. It is for him to say who shall be protected so that he may serve again, as was Peter,<sup>2</sup> and who shall seal his testimony with his blood as did James. But although He does not exclude us from the conflicts of life, he does fight by our side.

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<sup>1</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants* 86.    <sup>2</sup> *Acts* 12.



# WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

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## HE IS VICTORIOUS

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER DOES NOT SEEK to accomplish his purpose in creation by force of his power, but to win his way by the art of moral suasion. He does not command—he invites and asks and sometimes pleads. There would be no skill in carpentry if every kind of wood yielded immediately to any kind of treatment, and co-operated with the carpenter without regard to its own nature. Similarly, there would be no final glory in the creation of mankind if men were as clay in the hands of the potter, and had no distinctive nature of their own which must be taken into account. To be worthy of the powers of Divinity, therefore, the task of making men to which God has set himself must include persuading us to conform to his will gladly, and without doing violence to his own nature. Herein lies a far greater problem than can be solved by any mere issuance of orders. That is why the word of God says, "This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."<sup>1</sup>

When we think of the work of Divinity in these terms, the question immediately arises whether God will win. And this question is of vital importance to everyone of us, for God is our champion. Even though he must work in us, he also works for us. If he should fail, we would fail; if he should quit, we could not go on.

The man of faith answers the question concerning the power of God to win men to his side with an eager and heartfelt affirmative, and in justification of his faith, he points out that God has already won. When Jesus "endured the cross, despising the shame," he completed his demonstration of the possibilities of the divine in humanity. It is but the natural resultant of the life that he lived that he is now "set down at the right hand of the throne of God." In the earthly life of his Son, Jesus Christ, God has already shown that what he is

seeking to do for man can be done in man.

When we think of God as majesty incarnate, dwelling in the heaven of heavens, and surrounded by cherubim and seraphim who hasten to do his bidding, we are sometimes tempted to think that we, too, could rule the world with equity and might if we were as marvelously endowed as he is. We remember that many a housewife wrestles with financial problems akin to those which plague the business executive, but on a smaller scale, and is harassed and worried because she does not have the resources which the executive has built up. We wonder what God would do if instead of being high and lifted up, he were as weak and circumscribed as men are. Would he not win a greater triumph if, instead of ordering the harmony of the spheres like a celestial musician playing a perfect and responsive celestial organ, God should accept limitations such as men know and yet emerge triumphant over defeat and disaster and sin?

We all know the answer to questions like these. In the person of Jesus Christ, God accepted the limitations under which men live and labor. In Christ, he divested himself of all powers not available to men, and permitted wicked men to do to him the worst that men can do to anyone. He shared our life without asking any special favors, even though his right-doing brought down on his head the scorn and hatred of men with vested interests in the established order, and also the questioning and disloyalty of friends who did not understand; and in a life thus limited and harassed this God-in-man showed that righteousness is inherently strong, and does not have to be protected, that it can stand by virtue of its own character, and does not have to compromise. In the person of Jesus, God showed that Divinity does not have to be throned in majesty on high to exert the powers of its own character. Here, God was at work on the level of humanity. He was not merely a sympathetic onlooker, but a participant. He was not a patron, but a partner. Having none of the privileges of aristocracy, except the aristocracy of character, he nevertheless showed himself more than conqueror. The man of faith is justified in his faith, for in Jesus, God has already shown that victory is within his grasp.

"O wisest love, that flesh and blood,  
Which did in Adam fail,  
Should strive afresh against the foe,  
Should strive, and should prevail."

He who has already won the battle of life in the person of Jesus Christ, seeks to work with all of us and within everyone of us. If we exclude him from our lives, permanently, then we deny him victory; but if we welcome him and co-operate with him, then we ourselves are triumphant with him. And it is amazing how difficult it is to refuse the divine overture, and to "reject the counsel of God against ourselves." The most violent criticism of the nature of God, as it is revealed in Jesus, generally turns out to be a criticism of the currently popular estimate of Jesus rather than a criticism of Jesus himself. When men rebelled against portrayal of Jesus as an effeminate weakling, unable to stand up to the challenges of life, his defenders only had to point back to the true picture of Christ in the Gospels. When others protested that the Master was not concerned about practical matters, his defenders had only to turn from the popular misconception to the actual facts. As his honest critics have grown in understanding, they have heard the voice of Jesus, calling attention to his own true self and vindicating his claim to be accepted as the Lord and Leader of Life. Every generation has to grow up to a new and more comprehensive idea of Jesus.

Our Heavenly Father is inseparably related to mankind. There is no escape for him. He cannot discard us and throw us away as though we were bits of cloth or of waste metal. We are sentient beings who did not ask to be born, and who are now utterly dependent on the One who brought us into being; but who have tasted of the possibilities of life and have a strong will to live. To cast us aside would be to treat us worse than we would treat a dog. We cannot imagine God doing this; for it would be a denial of his own intrinsic nature. And if he does not abandon us, but strives with us with unfailing patience and kindness and understanding, no matter how long it might take, then he will win in us just as he has

already won in Jesus Christ. This is not to say that every man living will at some time attain the fullness of celestial glory; but it is to say that all who will respond in any measure to the loving kindness of Divinity will attain to the glory of the sun or of the moon or of the stars, and that those only will be lost who at last stand in utter defiance of the love which has sought them.

The very fact that he has entrusted men with freedom of action, coupled with the further fact that he will not abandon them, imposes certain limits on God himself. But God will not suffer any man or any set of men to defeat his eternal purpose. A dictator may strut across the stage of life, dominating the scene for a moment, but he must answer when the imperious hand of death beckons him into the wings. Moreover, God will not only defeat the dictator, cutting him short in the midst of a gesture if need be, but God will use him and any other man, so that enmity itself becomes an aid to victory. Not even the sons of perdition can therefore be thought of as living in vain. If the time comes when their steadfast rebellion has killed in them the last spark of the divinity which they inherited, then still will their purpose have been fulfilled, in part, in their influence in the total movement of history. God has used such men as Alexander and Cæsar and Napoleon, and even the Borgias had their place.

In worship the saints become dimly aware of the assumed triumph of divinity and hear afar the trumpet notes of victory. There are battles yet to be fought, and temporary defeats to be suffered; but the tide has turned. The enemy is on the run. His strength has been tested and found wanting. He has no secret weapons. And no detail is likely to trip up our great Champion, for he "is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power by which it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made—the light which is in all things; which giveth life to all things; which is the law by which all things are governed; even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things."<sup>2</sup>

The power of God does not permit him to ignore the relation of

the means to any given end, but only to select the appropriate means for the achievement of the ends which seem good to him. The creation of man, and the redemption of man, which is the sequel to creation, take time. With sublime courage and patience, God is applying the means which will result in our salvation; and there is a sense in which victory is already guaranteed. So long as this assurance of victory does not lull us to sleep, forgetful of our necessary part in working out our salvation, then we do well to treasure it. The "exceeding great and precious promises" which have been the heritage of the saints from the beginning can bring us poise amid uncertainties, hope amid despair, and courage which shall turn defeat into victory.

"Conquering now and still to conquer,  
Rideth a King in his might,  
Leading the host of all the faithful  
Into the midst of the fight;  
See them with courage advancing,  
Clad in their brilliant array,  
Shouting the name of their Leader,  
Hear them exultingly say:

"Not to the strong is the battle,  
Not to the swift is the race,  
Yet to the true and the faithful  
Victory is promised through grace."

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<sup>1</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants* 22: 23.    <sup>2</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants* 85: 2, 3.

## FAITH AND FREEDOM

### THE NATURE OF FREEDOM

IT IS WELL FOR THOSE OF US WHO ARE passionately concerned with the preservation of freedom to remember that since the First World War some peoples have deliberately abandoned the free way of life. They have done this because freedom has been thought of as an individual and a class affair. It has been regarded as essentially selfish, a hindrance to fellowship, and a prelude to social disintegration. Yet as we face the future and try to find grounds for a faith which shall make us victorious, we know in our souls that faith and freedom go together. If we are not free, but are determined by some outer force which is stronger than ourselves, and working for its ends rather than for ours, then there is no foundation for faith. On the other hand, if freedom means only the opportunity for disunion and for disintegration, this, too, will cut away from under our feet any ground on which faith might build.

It is obviously important then, that we see clearly just what is the true nature of freedom. As a preliminary step, let us look in on an ant-hill or beehive. Here we shall find a very high type of social organization, in which all that has to be done seems to be accomplished with a maximum of efficiency and a minimum of worry and confusion. But none of us want to be regimented like ants or bees, for this would deny us something which is extremely precious to human beings—our freedom of action. In building our world-order, we want as much as we can get of the efficiency of the ants and bees; but also want freedom, and at first we tend to think of freedom as the absence of restraint.

Freedom is nevertheless more than the absence of restraint. It includes also the presence of opportunity; and opportunity usually involves relations with other people. Robinson Crusoe was free only

in a very limited sense, for he could do only those things possible for him and his man Friday on a small island. In a similar way, I am not really free to use my telephone until hundreds of other people have telephones, too. Because of this, the spirit of liberty is not ultimately concerned with individual rights, but with the rights of individuals among their fellows. Freedom is inseparable from real co-operation, for without it co-operation is not genuine; and this free co-operation is the only form of joint effort which challenges and inspires and satisfies true men and women.

This is clearly apparent in the activities of a good orchestra, whose members renounce nothing of their liberty when they take their lead from the conductor. Under his guidance their individual excellencies are expressed on a new plane, which they could never reach without him. By accepting his leadership, each performer goes beyond himself, and all together share a new experience of joyous freedom under discipline. It is not surprising that after a great orchestral performance it is the members of the orchestra, rather than of the audience, who are the first to applaud.

The Apostle James used a stimulating phrase which is of value here. He referred to the "perfect law of liberty."<sup>1</sup> Paul, his fellow apostle, evidently had the same thought in mind when he wrote to the saints in Rome, "being then made free . . . ye become the servants of righteousness."<sup>2</sup> According to these writers, true freedom is not incompatible with law. There are conditions of freedom, and apart from these conditions there is no freedom worth the name. "No force government, or the blessing of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue, and by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles."<sup>3</sup> Ignorant men are still bound in chains of darkness, no matter what political rights they share. Self-centered men are not free, despite the privileges they acquire. Men who value public opinion too highly are not free, regardless of their local status:

"They are slaves who dare not be  
In the right with two or three."<sup>4</sup>

Strangely enough, rightful limitations make greater freedom possible. Highways must be comparatively narrow, for if they are too broad, they may as well not be there. One absolutely essential part of a good picture is the frame. It does not have to be elaborate or ornate, but it does have to be there to emphasize the fact that there the picture stops. The artist is not free to paint his picture until he recognizes and accepts and uses the limitations within which he must work. So, also, the person who would make the most of himself must be content to work within the limits of his own personality. It is useless for him to wish that he had been born of a different race or age or sex, or to lament that he is not taller or smarter or more dominant. But once he accepts the limitations of his personality, he finds that these very limitations provide the boundaries between which he can press forward toward his goal of perfection, or the framework within which he can make of his life a veritable work of art.

Even though we may feel that we have occasion for rebellion against the basic limitations under which we are called to live, mere rebellion will do nothing for us. A member of a despised or underprivileged race, such as a Jew or a Negro, cannot change the fact that he is a Jew or a Negro, as the case may be. Merely to rebel will lead only to futility and to defeat. But any representative of a downtrodden race can so direct his life as to strengthen every claim his people might make for respect and sympathy. The best Jews and the best Negroes have done just this, and have put to shame those who have despised them. No names stand higher than those of Einstein, Brandeis, Zangwill, Booker T. Washington, and George W. Carver.

There is a sense in which God has limited himself by giving us our agency. He has given us sovereignty over our own souls, and will not enter except by invitation. But by thus giving up the chance of dominance over puppets who could have been forced to do his will, he is winning friends who are kin to him and who are eager to do his will. He is like the wealthy man who limits the amount of his riches in order to share his goods with the needy, and in the very act extends the area of his riches both abroad and within his



own soul. And what is true of wealth is true of all other riches.

Freedom is not a right which a man can claim as his own; it is a right which men need to claim and which they ought to claim together by obeying its mandates. It is a right of faith, which men may make their own by acting faithfully, by living out the assumption that God wants them to be free and will gladly aid them in all their endeavors toward true freedom. Throughout history, whenever the spirit of freedom has been abroad, light and power have gone forth too by its side. The ancient Greeks were enlightened and empowered by their love of freedom, so that they led the world in thought and in the love of beauty and, few as they were, they defeated the mighty Persians at Salamis; and their story has been repeated again and again in the history of free peoples everywhere.

Freedom then is not something that is achieved in a moment, but which develops progressively as men beat back and conquer the forces that seek to enslave them—such forces as ignorance and lust and fear. Nor can freedom ever be guaranteed to any people, except by the development in them of those qualities which properly become free men. Indeed, those who truly care for freedom are likely to be but a small minority of the total population; but they are also likely to be capable of intensely passionate activity such as will give them power out of all proportion to their numbers. Reactionary forces gain temporary victory again and again, because men do not usually care to live strenuously, and the price of freedom is still eternal vigilance; but some can always be relied on to rebel before freedom is lost.

The picture of freedom which is most readily available to us is found wherever good and able men and women meet together in true friendship. Each is independent of the others, and yet everyone depends on all the others. Their communion is intelligent and stimulating and is spiced with both wit and affection. And behind the appearance of easy comradeship stands all that has made that comradeship possible—independence, honor, truth, courage, and sacrifice. Without these there is no freedom.

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1 James 1: 25. 2 Romans 6: 18. 3 Patrick Henry. 4 James Russell Lowell.

## FAITH AND FREEDOM

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### FREEDOM OF SPEECH

AMONG THE FREEDOMS MOST HIGHLY regarded by the Anglo-Saxon peoples is freedom of speech. This freedom, like democracy itself, is not everywhere regarded as a desirable thing. In many lands, the confusion of tongues is gladly sacrificed for the voice of authority; and authority seeks to keep itself in power by curtailing freedom of speech in the name of the peoples themselves. Freedom of speech is therefore a political achievement, the importance of which depends on some even more fundamental values.

If the state is the ultimate unit of society, and the integrity of the state depends on unity rather than on the participation of its peoples, their freedom of speech may well be regarded as an evil, because it makes for division and uncertainty. If the individual is the ultimate unit of society, on the other hand, and he stands on a par with his fellows by reason of their common humanity, then unlimited freedom of speech would seem to be part of his human heritage, and any curtailment of that freedom would seem to be a crime against humanity. But many thinking men, and particularly many Christian people realize that neither the state nor the individual exists apart from each other, and that neither has independent and final right. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me,"<sup>1</sup> is one of the ancient commands which has never been abrogated and which justifies itself with increasing clarity as the generations pass by. No individual has protection against the state, and no state has security from within and among her fellows, except as allegiance goes from both to God. Nations which realize the deep importance of these truths are especially careful to protect their people in their religious rights, and men

and women who respond to these truths serve their fellows in the fear of God.

Freedom of speech is intimately related to this question of ultimate sovereignty; for it is clear from the nature of creation, and from the experience of humanity as a whole, and from the word of God, that our Heavenly Father is not interested in men as individuals solely, nor in nations apart from the individuals composing them. God is concerned with men among men, and with nations in the sisterhood of nations. Each individual has value in his sight, but they have this value in relation to each other and not apart from each other. A good man is good to his fellows and for his fellows, and by reason of the contribution which they make to his life; and a great nation ministers to the the deepest needs of its own people and at the same time unites them in the richest possible fraternity with the people of other nations. Freedom of speech is desirable as it ministers to these ends; and it defeats its own purpose when it is regarded as an end in itself. Every citizen who properly appreciates his right of free speech is sensible also of the obligation to advance the common weal by what he says.

This fundamental principle was in the mind of Milton, a great protagonist of freedom, when he wrote: "Give me liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely *according to conscience*, above all liberties." The phrase which should be stressed here is "*according to conscience*," for it defines the nature of the liberties sought. But note clearly that the governing conscience is that of the individual speaking, and not of any other person. If we agree with Milton, we accord to every man the right of free speech, but at the same time we demand of him the contribution of a good conscience. He does not have to see as we see, but we have a right to expect him to be conscientious in his seeing. He must not be biased by self-interest, but must seek the common good as far as he can see and advance that common good.

The good conscience that undergirds justifiable free speech is at its best when it is enlightened by intelligence and sympathy

and self-control. The free speech of a man who will not or cannot inform himself concerning the matter at issue is devoid of light and truth. The free speech of a man whose sympathies are narrow and ungenerous is lacking in range and depth. The free speech of a man who is subject to the control of every passing gust of passion is wanting in reason and in steadfast purpose. Free speech therefore should not be used to persuade others to act without thought. It is not a tool preserved for the use of demagogues. It is, rather, one of the finest tools yet forged by man for making available to his fellows the best thinking and the deepest feeling of which the average man is capable. Like all fine tools, it should be used with care and with growing skill.

Freedom of speech in its finest and most demanding sense depends on independence of judgment. Each ministers to the other, and both minister to the individual and to the society of which he is part. The goal of this freedom is to make available to the group the finest thoughts and deepest feelings of its constituent members, to examine these in the light of group needs and group experiences, and to adopt the resultant good by common consent. But freedom of speech has to have some point from which to start, for we cannot go forward together unless we first meet together. For a meeting of minds we need dogma, which is just another name for basic and socially accepted truth. And for a meeting of hearts we need loyalty, which is passionate devotion to a cause. For the Christian citizen, both mind and heart find a meeting place in his religion; for Jesus proclaims the fundamental truths by which good men can live, and he unites these truths in the gospel of the kingdom to which men ought to give their passionate devotion.

Desirable freedom of speech in a democracy depends on acceptance of the great democratic doctrines about man in relation to his fellows: that he is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that he should be held responsible for his own acts, but not for those of another; that he should have equal rights with his fellows before the law. But these great doctrines, and others

like them, are not potent except as they are espoused with passion. We have no place for lukewarm patriots. That is why we have patriotic rallies and flags and pageants and martial music. But these can be immeasurably strengthened if we can relate our freedom of speech to our freedom of religion. Nothing so fires the passion of a man's devotion to the common good as to find his heart's desire for his fellow men approved at the place of prayer. Under such circumstances the patriot goes forth to the fray thrice armed. He says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"<sup>2</sup> and in the power of his faith, he is more than conqueror.

The spiritual basis of the freedoms which the American people cherish has been demonstrated as a result of the researches of Professor Van Tyne of the University of Michigan, who found that many of the sentiments and many of the actual phrases embodied in the speeches of the revolutionists were taken directly from sermons preached in Congregational and Presbyterian churches. The languages and ideas which so astounded the ruling classes of England had long been familiar to the American colonists, since these ideas and phrases had been born and shared in an environment in which the colonists were accustomed to thinking of their rights and duties in the spirit of worship.

The principle of freedom of speech has not always been highly regarded in the centers of religious thought and life. Privilege naturally tends to protect itself against criticism; and this is true in the churches as well as elsewhere. Nevertheless, the churches have done much to keep the principle of freedom of speech alive, and to provide its strongest safeguard by emphasizing its moral basis; and whether the churches have been alert or not, the hand of Divinity has been clearly evident in both protecting and using this freedom. In the experience of the people of the United States, the contribution of Hamilton, the aristocrat who saw so clearly the need of a strong central government, has thus been fused with that of Jefferson, who felt so deeply the primary importance of fraternity; so that from the time of Andrew Jackson

onward, liberty has been protected in one of the foremost democracies of the world by strong central authority wedded to expanding respect for the rights and duties of men as men.

In this connection the words of a great American and a great lover of freedom are particularly helpful:

"Those who won our independence believed that the final end of the State was to make men free to develop their faculties; and that in its government the deliberative forces should prevail over the arbitrary. They valued liberty both as an end and as a means. They believed liberty to be the secret of happiness, and courage to be the secret of liberty. They believed that freedom to think as you will, and to speak as you think are means indispensable to the discovery and spread of political truth; that without free speech and assembly, discussion would be futile; that with them, discussion affords ordinarily adequate protection against the dissemination of noxious doctrine; that the greatest menace to freedom is an inert people; that public discussion is a political duty; and that this should be a fundamental principle of the American government. They recognized the risk to which all human institutions are subject. But they knew that order cannot be secured merely through fear of punishment for its infraction; that it is hazardous to discourage thought, hope, and imagination; that fear breeds repression; that repression breeds hate; that hate menaces stable government; that the path of safety lies in the opportunity to discuss freely supposed grievances and proposed remedies; and that the fitting remedy for evil counsels is good ones. Believing in the power of reason as applied through public discussion, they eschewed silence coerced by law—the argument of force in its worst form. Recognizing the occasional tyrannies of governing majorities, they amended the Constitution so that free speech and assembly should be guaranteed."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 20: 3. <sup>2</sup> See *The Growth of the English Constitution*, by E. A. Freeman. <sup>3</sup> Justice Brandeis of the U. S. Supreme Court: Judgment in *Whitney vs. California*, 274 U. S. 357, 375, 376.

# FAITH AND FREEDOM

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## FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

**A**MONG THE MOST CHERISHED TREASURES of democracy is respect for a man's private life beyond the reach of public power—the inner world to which he retires to cultivate his soul and to find strength for life among his fellows. Such privacy is spiritual even more than it is physical, and it is indispensable if man is to continue a moral being. Here in the domain of his own personal entity, the real decisions of life are made; and here the trends of history are most truly determined, for it is here that a man discovers and determines what shall be his relation to God.

Freedom of belief and worship, without which there is no privacy for the soul, has not always been taken for granted. Indeed, it is only now coming to be recognized as one of the basic rights of personality, and this only among some, and not all, of the so-called "civilized" nations. Within nations whose ultimate authority rests on force, freedom of speech and freedom of belief are likely to be considered a menace to the central authority, and so are taboo from the beginning. Freedom of speech is taboo because it may so easily lead to an appeal from those in authority—an appeal taken in the name of an idea or of a principle. Freedom of belief and worship is taboo because it may so easily lead directly to an appeal from worldly authority—an appeal taken in the name of God.

It was inevitable that attempts would be made at some time in the course of human experience to eliminate appeals from the earthly potentates to the heavenly powers by arranging alliances between them. This has not been as difficult as might be supposed, since some central authority is absolutely necessary to effective social life, and this central authority ought to be obeyed in the pub-

lic interest, so long as it operates in its own sphere and for the common weal, rather than for the good of one group as opposed to another. But the alliances between the authorities of earth and of heaven have frequently been completely one sided, having been initiated and consummated by the earthly potentates only. In this way arose the doctrine of the divine right of the strong, a doctrine thought to bind the common man against rebellion, on the ground that the powers that be are ordained of God, and that to revolt against them is to rebel against God.

It has been only gradually, and in response to the protests of heaven in the hearts of godly men, that the limitations of human authority have been recognized; and since power always tends to entrench itself, the struggle for freedom of belief and of worship has been long and hard and bitter. It has been bad enough when unbelievers have been aligned against believers in this conflict; but unfortunately believers have frequently been arrayed against other believers in blind unwillingness to face the fact that freedom is an essential element in true worship; and that the human mind may be misled, but it cannot be forced into channels cut for it by other minds.

The struggle between the authority of force and the authority of the spirit has never been decided. It is in full sway now. In regions where it is felt that the security of the state demands that the authorities of the state shall answer to no higher authority, any true freedom of belief and worship is lacking. From this point of view, the antagonism between church and state in Germany was to be expected. But this is not only true in such distant lands. It is also true in any American or British community where religion is still identified with conformity to the convenient codes of morality, and where those who would challenge existing modes of action in the name of God are subject to scorn and ridicule and ostracism. Freedom of belief and worship is not primarily a political right granted by the state to its citizens; it is an attitude which is maintained under ideal conditions among those who have respect for each other growing out of their respect for the movements of the Spirit of God in the souls of men. It is useless to



talk of freedom of belief and worship as a goal of international endeavor unless we are eager to make it a goal of personal endeavor in our family and community relations.

Men of every race and creed owe a great deal to men of widely divergent insight who were willing in the past to stand unflinchingly for what they believed to be true. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of our broader understanding and sympathy; but for their valiant testimony, force would have triumphed over truth long ago. In gratitude to the martyrs, and in sober awareness that they were often very trying persons to live with and that their persecutors were often men of excellent intentions, we must cherish the freedom which they won but never enjoyed. But this does not mean that we may hold truth lightly. On the contrary, it means that we must hold to the highest truth that we can see, and that we must do so with passionate conviction. That is why we are free to believe and to worship as we will. And we must at the same time yield the same right to others, for that also is why we are free.

Freedom of belief and worship is important because it ministers to great living; and great living is like great architecture in that it must have proportion. When we look at a Greek temple, or at a Gothic cathedral, or yet at the Empire State building, we are conscious, first of all, of mass and proportion. No matter how beautiful the detail, if the proportions are bad the total impression is bad. This is true of life too. Here, as in architecture, the important dimensions are length and breadth and height; and all of these dimensions are emphasized in true worship as they are emphasized nowhere else. In worship any man of moral integrity may share a type of experience which reaches back to the beginning, which reaches out to include all who really want to be included, and which reaches up to the very throne of God.

In true worship we are lifted out of the limitations of our environment and stand for a moment in the midst of eternity. Here, in the most searching emotional experience that we can know, we find ourselves in responsive communion with Divinity. No one

aspect of our personality is called out for special enlightenment, but heart and mind and conscience are quickened simultaneously. Every man is alone with God, even though he may be in a crowded church; and yet every man is in the presence of his fellows, even though he may be praying alone. The keynote of the whole experience is holiness, and here at last we see clearly how imperative it is that right thinking and resolute doing shall be wedded everywhere to clean thought and purpose and action, both in individuals and in society.

When we travel by air, the height which we attain extends our range of vision. Those who are still walking on the earth can see just a little distance around them, but from our greater height we can see for miles in any direction, and so, in a sense, live in a larger present than they. In much the same way worship lifts us above the level of humanity so that in direct proportion to our approach to God we achieve a clear view of the world about us. In this atmosphere of prophetic foresight, we can see how kindly and with what sympathy God meets every true worshiper, and consequently what an important part freedom of belief and worship must play in shaping any truly desirable world order.

It is not difficult to become enthusiastic about religious freedom, since we usually think of it in relation to our own freedom rather than in relation to the freedom which we ought rightfully to extend to others. Even within the Restoration Movement there is a tendency to look backward, and to measure the orthodoxy of a member of the church in terms of his conformity to the revelations of yesterday. Of course we ought to be true to the best aspirations of yesterday, but we should be loyal to the spirit rather than to the letter, and to the principle rather than to the incident. The finest service which past revelation can perform is to prepare honest men for the greater revelations which are to come. The essential idea of belief in current revelation is that we are called to go on to perfection, interpreting fundamental truths in constantly widening areas of experience. A man of the prophetic caliber of Amos might be happy to bring to his generation a new vision of the

justice and mercy of God, while one such as Hosea might bring fresh understanding of the unfailing love of God; but in a new dispensation, each of these men of God could be counted on to interpret his essential message in new situations. The glory of the Restoration message is that it applies in this modern age truths which have been inherent in the Christian message from the beginning.

Truth is the atmosphere of spiritual life. We breathe it in, and it is vitiated because of the impurities of our own way of living. If we do not keep the windows of life open toward the free winds of the Spirit of God, then the time comes when the truth which once brought the life of the Spirit is so freighted with the poisons of humanity that it can no longer invigorate us. Our task is to keep the windows open, to let God speak freely, and to avoid the constant spiritual deterioration which follows when men live wholly to themselves.

Freedom of belief, then, means freedom from state interference with matters of the Spirit; but it does not mean freedom to believe what we will. It is freedom to follow the call of truth, each man according to his own nature and all men advancing by the light lifted up by the prophets and seers. It is freedom from the state, but for the Spirit. It should be freedom from scorn, and for light and truth. It must in time come to be freedom from personal bias and prejudice and for the light and truth with which God is eager to bless all mankind.

## FAITH AND FREEDOM

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### FREEDOM FROM WANT

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY, FREEDOM from want has become a possibility for all men, everywhere. Hitherto tens of thousands of persons have died of starvation every year in lands potentially rich in crops and fruits and flocks and herds and fisheries, while many thousands more have lived on the very edge of starvation. Even in the centers of civilization, the plight of the radically underprivileged has been an almost unrelieved tragedy. But modern methods of farming and fruit-growing and dairying can now be combined with modern possibilities in conservation and in distribution, until there remains no reason why any man anywhere should have to face starvation.

Want has to do with stark hunger and destitution; and day after day millions of men and women and children in China and India and Africa and elsewhere struggle against the threat of want defined in this sense. They struggle with the prospect of defeat always before them and with the knowledge that if they do not lose the battle in youth or in middle life they are likely to do so when age has sapped their resistance. In the centers of population, where the necessities of existence are more readily available, the struggle against stark want is not so strenuous or so continuous; yet even here a constant harassing struggle goes on, which keeps the weak and unfortunate at the very border line of necessity—underfed, poorly clothed, badly housed, and hopeless. It is hardly possible to realize what freedom from want would mean for humanity if it could be realized universally up to the level of adequate food, clothing, shelter, and reasonable security against the demands of old age or sudden misfortune. Poverty and want result in ill health, arrested physical and mental develop-

ment, cramped opportunity, denial of a rightful share in the achievements of the race, and inability to escape the dread cycle of disaster. Plenty, on the other hand, offers opportunities for vigor of mind and body, for the development of good taste, for appreciation of the best in literature, science, art, and philosophy, and for that creative self-expression which only leisure can make possible.

Freedom from want is a goal for all mankind which will only be gradually approximated, and then only as those who can care for themselves accept responsibility for the welfare of others who cannot yet care for themselves. The strong will have to aid the weak, if the weak are ever to become strong. There are two reasons why the strong and the well-endowed should be willing to accept this responsibility. The more selfish of these reasons is that the hunger of these in want poses a potential threat against all those who have but are unwilling to share. No man's possessions are safe when other men lack the bare necessities of life. The more fundamental of these reasons is that the man who is in need is related to the man who is well endowed, and that to let him suffer is to commit treason against one's own best nature, and to add to the suffering of that Best Friend of all mankind. The man who accepts responsibility for the needy because he feels that they have the rightful claim of kinship, acts in a better spirit and gets better results than the man who acts from purely selfish motives. Indeed, as a matter of simple efficiency, the selfish man had better learn to be altruistic.

While we are all under moral obligation to provide the conditions under which men can achieve freedom from want, we cannot guarantee this freedom to any man. He must win it for himself; for there is no possibility of making a lazy man free. We might give him protection from want, but that is another thing. That is what we should give to the aged and infirm—to people who in the nature of things cannot care for themselves. But when we seek to give security from want to those who could earn it if they would, we only succeed in completely pauperizing them.

Idleness is a charge on the total productive power of the group. If this idleness is voluntary, if it is deliberate laziness, then it is akin to theft. The lazy man takes the results of the work of others and appropriates them to his own use; and this is theft whether that man is a pauper or a millionaire. The solution for such idleness is either conversion or coercion. The once idle man who is converted begins to partake of the spirit of freedom. He is no longer dependent on any other man's effort. He plays his part; therefore he is free. But the lazy man who still feels no inner compulsion to do his part in the total task is not free; he is the prisoner of his own shiftlessness. We have the highest possible authority for saying that he should not eat as long as he will not work; and we should see to it that this arrangement is carried into full effect. No man is likely to starve under this program; and it may well be that the work which he will unwillingly undertake in order to eat may become attractive to him eventually for its own sake, and so he may be led to a change of heart also. The lazy man who is forced to work in order to eat may find himself converted almost against his will; his reluctance to make a friend of work may have been because the two had never met. Having been forcibly introduced to each other, they might yet become fast friends.

Much of the world's idleness is unwanted. Involuntary servitude to unemployment sounds like a contradiction in terms, but it is nevertheless a form of slavery which is only too well known throughout industrial Europe and America. Millions are haunted by the fear of want because they have no security in employment. Those who are sincere in their love for the ideal of freedom from want must therefore concern themselves with the problems of the industrial system; they must understand its motivation, its costs, and its rewards. They will see then that the problem of unemployment must become the responsibility of the community, and not just of the individual worker; and that it must be solved on a community and national and international scale if true and secure freedom from want is ever to be widely approximated. In

the course of working out this freedom, we may well have to abandon the profit motive in industry, except in the sense that industry has to be profitably run to continue to operate. The primary goal of industry will then be visioned in terms of keeping people at work happily and in line with their basic talents, and in order that they may together satisfy the fundamental needs of mankind with the least possible drudgery and the highest possible artistry. That way lies the beginning of real freedom.

The road to freedom in the areas with which we are most immediately concerned is by way of industrial and political organization to guarantee moderate hours for congenial labor coupled with such a share in the fruits of industry as will secure necessary food, clothing, shelter, and the opportunities of enterprise and of leisure. These will not be secured by toppling potentates, or by voting out those in power, or by defeating our enemies; although any or all of these steps may be preliminary to final victory. But inherent in any free and final solution of the problem we are considering will be some measure of self-discipline and of self-sacrifice. Ultimately it is a matter of integrity. In a system of free industrial enterprise, rights and duties march shoulder to shoulder, and this means that any man who lives from the fruits of industry must feel in honor bound to make his contribution to industry.

We must eat if we are to live; but not all our wants are that vital. Many of the wants of the Western peoples have been deliberately created and then carefully cultivated as a means to profit. Tobacco and intoxicants have thus come to have a high place on the list of wants, although their use is actually harmful. Fruits and vegetables for which locally grown foods could be substituted easily have also come to be considered necessities. There are numerous other illustrations. Now if we regard freedom from want as a charter for humanity, something so precious and so essentially right that we are willing to sacrifice our own secondary wants in order that the primary needs of other peoples can be supplied, the way to freedom may easily lead through self-

discipline and renunciation to better health of both body and spirit. Moreover, if we feel that we are under obligation to aid the underprivileged and that we have no moral right to enjoy fruits of the earth which are not available to other men, and if we nevertheless feel that satisfaction of our secondary wants will enliven our lives as some ribbon or flower will enliven an otherwise unattractive hat, then here we have a strong incentive toward mobilizing agriculture and industry on a world basis, and for the satisfaction of just wants. Such mobilization presents innumerable initial problems, but it promises the opening of new markets and the extension of employment and the broadening of fellowship.

Freedom from want means the right to live above the level of bare existence. It does not mean either the right or the obligation of the Western peoples to impose their culture and their industrial or political patterns on all the peoples of the world. Freedom from want must be achieved as fully as possible within the framework of the nature and experience of those concerned. It will not mean therefore the development of a world standard of living, but only of a world program to free men in order that they might truly live.

Freedom from want as we have been discussing it is to be achieved through world-wide participation; but it must be increasingly intelligent participation. It is difficult to know whether laziness or stupidity is the greater menace to our success. Each certainly plays an important part. And the stupidity, like the laziness, is by no means confined to any single class, or group, or nation. This stupidity does not usually derive from lack of basic capacity for understanding, but from an uninspired selfishness and from preoccupation with things which have taken the place of a zest for life. Much of it would vanish if there should be let loose over the world a "rushing mighty wind" of moral passion, well and intelligently geared to the commonplace needs of average men. Stupidity comes from lack of alertness to important issues, and this alertness will be quickened and the stupidity overcome when we learn together that freedom from want is not slogan



enough for real men; we need to be free from want in order to be free to live; and to live that men might be free is to live indeed.

The solution of our difficulties lies in a new and inclusive three-way partnership between God and man and nature; a partnership in which exploitation of man by man or of nature by man will be regarded as fundamentally immoral and therefore as ultimately suicidal. Life is built for this partnership; discords within it are disruptive of the harmonies of the spheres. There will be no rich freedom for men until this partnership is welcomed, and attempts at dominance and exploitation are abandoned. Men whose vested interests have robbed them of the power to see clearly have a way of sorting out the facts of history and of experience, and displaying those which appear to show that the mailed fist and the lying tongue and the lustful eye have been the means to wealth and power. But history and experience are really against them. We live in a world where naked force and greedy hands and contemptuous hearts are constantly thwarted. Not occasionally, but as a rule, men and nations are rewarded or punished by what they themselves become. Their shortsightedness and greed turn back and mock them. Here, for example, is the way that an expert expresses his idea of the relationships between morality and economics and geology. Dr. Paul Sears says:

"The sins of our fathers are being visited upon the heads of their children. The raging waters of today are the price of the waving fields of grain, of forests destroyed, of roads and cities thrown together with no far-seeing plan. To an eye trained to read the landscape, this tragic disaster of flood has but one meaning. Our continent is sick. The floods of today boil over a land stripped of its cover and so robbed of its moisture that wells must be sunk from twelve to sixty feet deeper than ever before to strike water. This land is covered by a network of highways which defy natural drainage patterns. How far must suffering and misery go before

we see that even in the day of vast cities and powerful machines, the good earth is our mother and that, if we destroy her, we destroy ourselves."<sup>1</sup>

Freedom from want for all men is an ideal worthy of the allegiance of all men. Its realization will call for discipline of the hand and the eye and the mind and the heart, for adjustments between individuals and groups and nations and races, and for the release of a power which men cannot command by themselves. Here, as in all our pursuits of freedom, we come back in time to realize our ultimate dependence on God. And here, as always, we can be grateful that God is at work now.

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<sup>1</sup> From Paul B. Sears' *Deserts on the March*, with permission of its publishers, the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma.

# FAITH AND FREEDOM

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## FREEDOM FROM FEAR

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESCAPE FROM fear, for it is part of the inheritance of every animal, including man. Fear is as natural as hunger and thirst, and grows in us as life advances. The newly born child apparently comes into the world with just two fears, the fear of falling and the fear of loud noise; but these two fears are joined eagerly by their newborn kin as the growing child comes to know fire and burning, and water and drowning, and strangers and enmity, and life and death. In any world that we can imagine, fear and the conquest of fear must have their part.

Fear is part of our equipment for life. It is the picket who is constantly on guard to warn us of approaching danger, so that if this danger is real, we are well armed in advance and ready for the battle of life. This is not theory, but fact. Fear causes the ductless glands to pour adrenalin into the blood and this in turn makes the liver give up sugar to feed the muscles. The adrenalin also causes the blood vessels to contract so that the blood circulates more quickly and carries waste away from the muscles and so fights fatigue. Not content with this, the adrenalin also causes deep breathing which provides the oxygen needed to burn up the wastes created by excessive effort. And, finally, this deep breathing starts the whole process over again by releasing more adrenalin.<sup>1</sup>

Legitimate fear has blessed men in every age and has caused them to face the realities of life and to prepare to meet them. It has led to the building of defenses against every kind of disaster—physical, mental, and spiritual. So we have dikes and levees, fire-fighting equipment, and hospitals; schools, clinics, and asylums; poetry, philosophy, and religion.

But, as we all know, fear is not always a friend. Once fear takes

charge of a man's life, it puts him on the defensive, makes him feel isolated in a hostile world, and turns his energies in on himself, so that the joy and spontaneity of life are frozen at the root. Such fear often creates the very disasters which it apprehends, as when his fear of the audience causes the public speaker to stammer, or when his fear of disaster robs the leader of the self-confidence upon which his people rely in maintaining their own morale. Our social well-being is constantly threatened by fears which minister to suspicion and envy and hatred; and the wars which have plagued humanity from the beginning may be traced in a large degree to baseless fears which the nations have entertained one concerning another.

Obviously the first step in the conquest of our fears is to face them squarely. Many of us fail to realize this, so that our fears grow like yeast and soon permeate our lives. Facing fear enables us to recognize many fears which are imposters masquerading in fearsome clothes or ghosts created by the imagination. They are not easily banished, for their name is legion; but we have begun to rout them when we discover their true nature. Other fears will be recognized as reasonable, but not necessarily paralyzing. We can do something about them. There is no reason to dread them, but only to prepare to meet the dangers about which they warn us. Among these fears are those which arise from our own actions. He who wields authority unjustly may reasonably anticipate resentment and possible retaliation. The antidote for his fear of reprisals is to cease from injustice. It has been said that "fear is the tax which conscience pays to guilt," and wherever this is true, the corrective is obvious.

Much of the fear which stalks abroad in its chronic forms as worry and anxiety arises from physical and nervous strain and from a feeling of isolation amid the cares of life. It will help very markedly to recognize the facts in such situations. Rest and relaxation are evidently called for; but just to know that these anxieties arise in oneself is to take an important step toward their elimination. Related to these fears is anxiety over the welfare of a great cause. When we face this, we soon recognize it as simple lack of faith; we assume that the cause has no defenders but us, and think that our failure means

unqualified disaster. In this situation we must remember that when any cause is truly great, it has about it an attractive power which will win it friends in the most unlikely places. Stephen hardly expected the young man Saul, who held the clothes of his murderers, to take up his work and to carry it forward beyond anything that Stephen could reasonably anticipate. It was not Stephen who won Saul, but the cause, and the One who stands behind every great cause.

Truth is first perceived and advocated by minorities, by men and women who share something of the spirit of the prophets and seers. Pioneering for truth has always been costly; it is likely to continue costly; but he who has been fired by passionate concern for the truth will scorn to betray his vision by seeking once again the protective coloring of the herd. The very facts which mark him out for persecution are the facts which mark him as a superior person. Knowing this, he will learn to welcome as a badge of honor the danger which cannot be avoided. Many martyrs have known the courage which such devotion breeds; but what some of us fail to realize is that this same brand of courage can be ours if we will but find a cause big enough to live for, and if need be to die for. The people of God, in particular, are in the business of doing the seemingly impossible, just because it ought to be done. "When a thing becomes possible the politicians take it over," but until the trail has been blazed, the pioneers are very much in demand.

Few antidotes for fear are so effective as useful action. Such action not only serves to meet the threatening danger, but it also builds an inner reserve of poise and courage. Having done all, we can stand to better effect than if we had waited for the onslaught unprepared. The fears which minister to life are valuable in direct proportion as they incite us to useful action. Thus Paul's fear that after having preached to others he himself might become a castaway kept him actively alert against the enemies of righteousness; and Lincoln's fear lest hatred and bitterness should mar the work of reconstruction made him especially watchful that his own work should be planned and administered "with malice toward none, with charity for all."

We can find strength and courage, also, in awareness of a com-

mon purpose in which others join eagerly with us. What a tower of strength Winston Churchill has been to the British people and, indeed, to the whole allied cause. Surely he was aware of this when, in the tragically desperate summer of 1940, he stood up amid the ruins of London and hurled defiance at the enemy. And surely the knowledge that if he did not stand, then England was lost must have tapped resources of power held in reserve for just such a desperate hour. Morale has been defined as that quality of courage which grows in men who stand in the strength of their common heritage, and with faith in their trusted leaders.

Courage can be won, yet again, by placing our most cherished treasures beyond the reach of the enemy. Wealthy men in war-torn Europe seem to have acted on this principle in transferring their investments to the United States and other places remote from the centers of conflict. Museums and art galleries, too, transferred their most precious possessions to areas which were not threatened with destruction. But a much more helpful illustration of this principle is in the experience of an English woman during an air attack. She had been desperately afraid, not so much for herself as for her loved ones. Then, in the midst of her agony, she faced what she feared; she thought what would be left if her home was actually hit. And there like a clear light in the darkness she came to recognize the fact that bombs cannot touch love and sympathy and the assurance of immortality. When she realized this, and knew that the major investments of her life were already far beyond the reach of the aggressor, she found new hope and more stalwart courage filling her veins as the warm blood of life. For the first time she caught the true significance of the words of Jesus: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up treasures for yourself in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."<sup>2</sup> They best serve the highest needs of man who draw courage from their faith, knowing that their enduring investments are beyond the reach of the wicked.

The more we consider the nature of fear, the more we see that the conquest of fear must first take place inside men. Poor and weak and wicked man cannot be protected permanently from legitimate fears, not to mention the phobias which creep on the unwary out of the darkness of subconscious life. The only permanent deliverance from evil is through the cultivation of vigor of body and mind and spirit. Any program looking toward freedom from fear must therefore be a program for life—for goodness and for health and for fellowship. In the long run, it must be a program of faith.

No one is so completely secure, and so free from the threat of real and definite danger, as the man who has gone into life partnership with Divinity. This partnership will not free him from the necessity of facing the hazards of life; but it will secure him at the beginning against any ultimate defeat, so long as he himself keeps the faith. Faith is fearlessness, and fear is faithlessness, because fear discredits either the power or the good will of Divinity. The early saints were both effective and courageous, because they knew from personal experience that even disaster could be made to yield rich spiritual fruits in the lives of godly people.

Jesus furnished in his own life the best example of sane and constructive living that the world has ever known. A major factor was his complete conquest of fear, and this victory was directly related to his unflinching communion with God. His own spiritual life was nourished from the beginning on the testimonies of the prophets who had preceded him, and he found strength in the assurance that "underneath are the everlasting arms."<sup>3</sup> He had received as his own the testimony, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."<sup>4</sup> But the divine word across the ages was not sufficient for Jesus by itself. The word was made rich with meaning for Jesus because it became part of his own life practice. Jesus had no fear because he knew God for himself.

The best antidote for fear that the world has yet discovered is that quality of faith in God which sets a man to work at a task which demands his highest skill and devotion; with due regard for the hazards of life, but with complete trust in God. Today, as in ages

long past, faith makes men whole. Fear is unduly introspective; it is life on the defensive. But faith sees life as a challenge and an opportunity. It gives a man a cause in which it is an honor to serve, and builds his morale by reminding him that he is marching with the heroes, and under the finest possible leadership. And in order that his fears may have no rightful foundation, faith calls every devotee to prayer and confession and repentance.

Freedom from fear cannot be guaranteed from without, although we all can and should make every effort to reduce the external causes which bring fear into the hearts of men. In the final analysis, freedom from fear is to be won within the portals of our own lives. It is a gift of God, granted freely to men and to nations as they do the will of the Maker and find peace in his strength. It cannot be given to any man in isolation from his fellows, for the fear which grows at the heart of my brother constitutes a real threat against my own life and peace. But God is at work now, enlarging the areas of our mutual concern, and building for that freedom from fear which is a sign and seal of his kingdom.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear, and Rage*, by Walter B. Cannon. <sup>2</sup> Matthew 6: 19-21. <sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 33: 27. <sup>4</sup> Isaiah 26: 3.



# FAITH AND FREEDOM

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## GOD AND DEMOCRACY

WHEN WE THINK OF GOD AT WORK IN the world today, the question will be asked soon whether he is at work in the dictatorships or in the democracies. And the assumption back of the question will be that he is at work in either, or neither, or both. But the man who has real faith in God will answer that he is at work in both dictatorships and democracies, but not in both equally.

God has to work harder in totalitarian states than he does in the democracies. "If the iron be blunt . . . then must he put forth more strength."<sup>1</sup> One is reminded of the story of Jonah, and of the generation-long concern of Divinity for the people of Nineveh, who could not "discern between their right hand and their left hand."<sup>2</sup> The very fact that God can count on little or no co-operation from the government requires that he shall work especially hard and in subtle ways to be sure that his investments in the lives of people under dictatorial rule are not lost or, worse still, taken over by the enemy.

Dictatorship is an able device for achieving material ends. On the other hand democracies always fumble. This is because the very endeavor to develop a sound public opinion and to make it effective delays action. Where a dictator shapes his own public opinion, there is no such delay. And just because it is so much quicker to build roads and to equip an army and to conduct foreign policies without debate, so it is very easy to believe that good roads and plenty of guns and a strong foreign policy are the true signs of good government. But they are not. A good government is good for the people. In a democracy, the very fact of willingness to fumble rather than to abandon democratic pro-

cedure points to a supremely significant truth; which is that the material ends gained in a dictatorship are not so important as the spiritual ends gained when all the people share responsibility for the common weal.

The spirit of man cannot be put in a strait jacket. For reasons which seemed good to him, God has made us that way. And so, in every age men have rejoiced that "stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage." Therein lies the death knell of dictatorships in the modern world. No matter how men may be regimented, some of them will lift up their hearts to God and reach out their hands to their brothers. It is as natural for this to happen as for the grass roots buried under the sidewalk to break or split the heavy cement in their passion for light and freedom.

Dictators must feed and clothe their people. But once the physical needs of men are guaranteed, these men become dissatisfied with merely physical blessings. They assert their right to be treated as men, and begin to show concern for truth and justice and honor. The roots of democracy can thus be traced back to the very nature of God and of men. Its early manifestations can be seen, for example, in the faith of the Hebrews that the justice of God would be vindicated against the tyrannies of earthly kings, and in the success of the Greeks in devising small communities in which men shared their joint responsibilities in an atmosphere of freedom under law.

It is well for us to keep in mind that democracy has its roots deep in the past, and that wise men of past centuries have loved democracy as we do. There is a modern flavor, for instance, about the description of the Athenian constitution given by Pericles more than two thousand years ago. He says: "We are called a democracy because the city is administered not for the few, but for the majority. But although, according to the laws, everyone in his private relations is upon an equality, yet the man who is in any way distinguished receives preference in public life, not as a privilege; but because of his merits; and if a man can serve his

country, poverty or obscurity will not stand in his way. Liberty is the principle of our public life, and in our everyday life we are not suspicious or angry with our neighbor because he pleases himself, nor do we look upon him with the kind of disapproval which, though harmless, is annoying. Whilst we do not worry one another by interference in private affairs, we are prevented from breaking the laws by our respect for them."

Because Greece has contributed so richly to our modern democratic way of life, we may be excused for using another quotation illustrating the heart of the democratic spirit in the Greek city states: "Its essence was an ardent belief in the free exercise of the human faculties—freedom, that is, for every man to take his share in the direction of his country's destiny; freedom to enjoy the activities of mind and body with which nature has provided him; freedom, above all, to follow the dictates of his own reasoning powers. And just because the Greek was willing to trust his reason and 'follow whither the argument might lead,' he was able to see more clearly than most men have seen 'what is really worth-while in life . . . There were many elements of coarseness and cruelty in his character. He was blind to the inhumanity of slavery and the degradation of his women folk. The specifically Christian virtues formed no part of his make-up. But, apart from these limitations, 'he saw life steadily and saw it whole.' He knew what made for a full and happy life—healthy exercise of body, skill of hand and energy of brain, the zest of a congenial occupation and the enjoyment of leisure well used for the appreciation of the beautiful, the society of friends and a vigorous interchange of ideas."<sup>3</sup>

The Greeks believed in small city states because democracy demands interchange of thought and experience, and in those days such interchange was only possible in restricted areas. Moreover, just because the specifically Christian virtues formed no part of his make-up, the Greek citizen felt no qualms of conscience when he assumed that slaves would provide for material needs while free citizens would attend to politics. Today we are trying to

work out the democratic idea on a continental scale and without slavery; and it is stimulating to reflect that as we go forward in our experiment in finer democracy, God is trusting us with machines to replace our slaves, and the automobile, the streamlined train, the airplane, and the radio to bring us quickly into intimate contact with each other.

Rome, too, made a valuable contribution to the life of the modern democracies. Rome did not originate much; but she did adapt and transmute and pass on that which she learned from the peoples she conquered. Because of the amazing tolerance of the Romans, good ideas which might easily have been lost were rescued and given prominence. To these were added basic qualities for which the Roman citizens were justly famous and which are of importance in every real democracy. Among these basic qualities were three in particular: *gravitas*, or a sense of responsibility set over against the enthusiasm which carries men away; *pietas*, which meant proper submission to rightful authority, and which was the basis of discipline; and *simplicitas*, or the endeavor to see things clearly as they truly are.

It is difficult to define democracy. This is partly because democracy is still growing up. We best understand democracy when we note the principles underlying its effective functioning. The most fundamental of all these underlying principles is the dignity of man as man, the sanctity of personality. Democracies are built on confidence in the possibilities hidden in men as against all theories of class and caste and slavery. Men may and do have different responsibilities; but from king to peasant and from peasant to king the democracies say that all men have something of infinite worth in them and that the major function of government is to set these possibilities free. Whatever the statesmen and philosophers of the revolutionary period might have meant by the phrase, we do not now believe that "all men are created equal" in the sense that all have equal possibilities or that all should carry an equal share of the common burden. But we do believe that all men should have equal rights before the

law, and equal opportunities to express the best that is within them, and equal responsibility in safeguarding and enriching the true wealth of mankind. All this goes back to the spiritual principle that all men are of equal worth in the sight of God.

A second underlying principle of democracy is that people grow by sharing their differences.<sup>4</sup> Great music is produced from the "harmony of discords," and rich democratic life grows from the contribution of many men of varying capacities and interests. This principle has been finely illustrated for Christian men and women in the diverse character and abilities of the disciples who followed after Jesus, and in the plea of the Apostle Paul for unity in the body of Christ: "When he ascended upon high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men . . . and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints and the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ."<sup>5</sup>

To call this the principle of growth through sharing differences is but to give another name to the principle of fellowship, which means joint-completion. Each participant seeks to supply what the other lacks, and both grow together in glad dependence on each other. They are closer even than partners. They are like two shoes, or upper and nether millstones, or positive and negative poles in electricity—they are fellows. And fellowship is democracy in the making.

Inseparably connected with this principle is the right to freedom of expression. Such freedom is not a concession granted to the citizens by their rulers, but a responsibility shared by all. Ideally the citizen is not only permitted to share freely in matters of public concern, but he is under obligation to do so. His right to freedom of expression is the obverse side of his duty to share that part of his skill and experience which can serve the common weal. He makes his best contribution of comment and criticism and service and receives in return the protection and fellowship of the group. Students of democracy recognize this as the ideal in the field of government, and followers of Jesus

recognize this ideal as the call of God.

Still another principle of effective democracy is the principle of responsibility; and this, too, is related to those which have gone before. You cannot make a democracy out of a people who are forever thinking of their rights and never of their responsibilities. Edmund Burke, whose right to speak in a democracy is beyond question, once said: "It is our business carefully to cultivate our minds, to rear to the utmost vigor and maturity every sort of generous and honest feeling that belongs to our natures. To bring the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth; so to be patriots as not to forget that we are gentlemen. To model our principles to our duties and to our situations. To be fully persuaded that all virtue which is impractical is spurious; and rather to run the risk of falling into faults in a course which leads us to act with effect and energy, than to loiter out our days without blame and without use. Public life is a situation of power and energy. He trespasses against his duty who sleeps on his watch, as well as he that goes over to the enemy."

The difficulty with democracy as we have been describing it is that it is still an ideal and a goal rather than a present fact. The enjoyment of true democracy is hindered by prejudice and by ignorance and by local and sectional pride. Even those who are willing to die for democracy, if need be, are hardly willing to trust it in affairs of daily life; and the ideal is therefore constantly betrayed by those who give it lip service. The reason for this is that democracy demands more than we are willing to give, because we are fundamentally selfish.

If we face the facts squarely, therefore, we cannot have faith in democracy except as we see the democracy which we know as the forerunner of the democracy about which we have dreamed. We have no grounds for thus anticipating the triumph of true democracy, except as we believe that the whole enterprise is underwritten by God.

A Roman Catholic writer<sup>6</sup> points out that the lawyer and the

doctor and the corporation attorney and the big newspaper owner, and the other men to whom the democratic way of life has brought security in private achievement are strongest of all for democracy as we have known it. If this is so, and to a large degree it is, then the democracy served by such men is merely a device for aiding the strong. But to the greatest men of our time, men like the late Thomas Masaryk, democracy is a spiritual enterprise in which God is gradually working out his purpose by sharing that purpose with as many men of good will as he can reach. Masaryk calls for a democracy based on "love and on the conviction that we should help in the world toward the realization of the rule of God. True democracy," he has said, "is the realization of the rule of God on earth," and in a statement which is now particularly timely this great Czech patriot advises the lovers of democracy, "Let facts speak for themselves, and use them as evidence . . . To influence by ideas and arguments and remain personally in the background; not to be opportunist, not to snatch at things which pass with the day, to have one plan and one standard in everything; and one thing more—not to be importunate."

In democracy conceived in such terms as these God is most certainly at work.

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<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes 10: 10. <sup>2</sup> Jonah 4: 10, 11. <sup>3</sup> From *Every Day Life in Ancient Greece*, by C. E. Robinson, Clarendon Press, Oxford. By permission of the publishers. <sup>4</sup> Ably discussed by Edwin C. Aubrey in *Religion and the Present Crisis*. <sup>5</sup> Ephesians 4: 8, 11-13; also I Corinthians 12: 1-31. <sup>6</sup> Father Wilfred Parsons in, *Which Way Democracy*.

## ENEMIES OF FAITH

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### PRIDE

ONE OF THE DEADLIEST ENEMIES OF FAITH in action is pride. There is nothing degrading in taking second place if that is our rightful place, for someone must play second fiddle if we are to have an orchestra. But many a promising harmony has been turned into discord by some man's determination to be seen and heard when all that he needed to do was to be helpful. Pride is from hell. As G. K. Chesterton says, "The wickedest work in the world is symbolized not by a wineglass, but by a looking glass."<sup>1</sup>

Much of the most corroding evil in the world begins in some attempt at superiority for its own sake. How many promising personal friendships have been wrecked because someone wanted to flaunt his superiority. How much of the beauty of simplicity has been lost through the desire to appear impressive. How much brooding resentment has sprung from inability to appear as successful as others or to challenge their right to leadership. What an utter waste such envious pride is; and what an enemy to constructive achievement. A few years ago Germany was placing the whole world in her debt because of her contribution to science and to music. Then she became eager for a place in the sun, and began to listen with pleasure to talk of the German super-race. So, she who might have conquered through service was damned through pride. What makes this even more pitiful is the fact that she did not have to do it. History teems with examples of conquest through submission. Seneca, the Roman Stoic philosopher, said of the Jews, "The customs of that most accursed nation have gained such strength that they have been now received into all lands, the conquered have given laws to



the conquerors"; and the Greeks and the Romans and many less known peoples have conquered in the same way.

The fundamental evil of overweening pride is that it is life turned in on itself instead of being directed outward toward constructive activity. It looks backward when it should be looking forward. It says, "I have arrived; I am an important person," instead of saying, "Here is something which ought to be done; let us do it together." The proud man scorns struggling movements just because they are housed in attics. He forgets that the major movements of history began in attics, and that some of the greatest literature of all times was written there, and that music which has gladdened the years was first heard there. He would pass by Lincoln because of Lincoln's homespun clothing, or Cromwell because of his farming background, or Jesus who came from Nazareth. He forgets, if he ever knew, that the poems which were sold for a quarter on the streets of Greenwich Village during the depression, were rather better than worse because the poets were hungry and wrote about life in the raw.

One of the first tests of a truly great man is his sense of oneness with the rest of humanity. He is not unaware of his own abilities. Certainly he does not pretend that he cannot do what he obviously can do. But he does not take himself too seriously just because he inherited certain potential powers and was able to develop them through hard work and under not too unfavorable circumstances. He knows how easily he might have missed his mark if he had been weak, or ill, or unobservant, or bigoted, or if he had been born elsewhere, or had never met his teacher or partner or competitor. Such a man's greatness is likely to be even further developed as time passes, for he has the insight which only sympathy can give, and this sympathy will open many a doorway to further understanding and power.

It will perhaps be well before we go any further to note the militant pride which some of us take in our children, and which is a hard and obnoxious thing quite remote from the satisfaction

which goes hand in hand with affection redeemed by a sense of humor. This harsher and more aggressive attitude is sometimes called "proper price," and the very fact that the adjective is added is in the nature of an apology, a plea that the present circumstances are somehow different. Really the circumstances are rarely very greatly different. Only very exceptional people achieve heights which have not already been surmounted by people from the next street or city or county. To be inordinately proud of fairly ordinary accomplishments is therefore to admit that our range of comparison is quite narrow; and, worse still, the prouder we are, the more likely we are to keep this range narrow in order to maintain our pride. Indeed, if you want to be proud, but do not want to take the risks of large adventure, you can always do it by narrowing down the area and reducing the elevation of your standard of pride. I have known small boys with tobacco-chewing fathers who were proud of their ability to spit a long way; and I have known older people who seemed to be actually proud of their operations.

Not infrequently, pride in our children is but another name for pride in our own accomplishments—that these are our children, or that they have fulfilled our ambitions for them. This is just a palatable and slightly disguised form of conceit; other folk are not likely to enjoy it, and it may easily cause them to decry the very real victories which our young people may have won. And, yet again, to be delighted that we or our children have reached a certain level of accomplishment is to confess that we might easily have fallen below it. This is but to say that we are fairly average folk who have somehow graduated with superior grades. As a matter of fact, a great deal of pride of the type which we have been discussing is of this quality; it reflects a fundamentally defensive attitude, no matter how aggressive it may appear, and it can very easily merge into an attitude of deep resentment over real or fancied slights.

One of the major prides of modern times has been the pride of civilized men in man himself. Victorian optimism expressed

itself in belief that progress was inevitable. In the last half-century humanism, a child of this high-vaulting optimism has been increasingly to the fore, with its egotistic emphasis on the rights of man and its negation of the rights of Divinity, taking its dominant pattern from human progress and having as its slogan the self-perfectibility of human personality. Humanism has sought to reverse the natural order of things, and to act as though what seems to minister to man is therefore right, rather than that what is right truly ministers to man. Humanists have therefore sought the center of rightness in man and not in the will of God. It has taken a world war, or two, to shock us out of our self-centered complacency, and away from the idea that men who are well informed and skilled are therefore good, and the self-motivated builders of the City Splendid. Only recently has it begun to dawn on some people that to take pride in man's self-perfectibility is closely akin to counting the chickens before plugging the incubator.

Even among some who have been called to be Saints, we can discern a measure of pride, which seeks to disguise its backward-looking nature because it is pride in the church. It seems to me that we have reason to be deeply grateful for what God has done in and for and through responsive men and women in the past, and to take courage therefrom. But the past is gone. We are now confronted with the challenges of our own times; and we have no right as yet to wear the laurels which are not yet won. To do this is to assume that the victories which faith sees in the tomorrow are for our present enjoyment rather than for our present stimulation. Humanity is sick and in dire need of help; and yet the church is deeply infected with those very maladies which she is commissioned to cure. Here is cause for repentance; not for pride. Too often we have worshiped the beast, accepting the standards of worldly success as the measures of spiritual greatness; and pride will betray us into like action again and again. The early Christians were too busy and too hard-pressed by their enemies to be self-regarding and proud;

but they nevertheless set free in the teeming cities of the Roman Empire a power working through consecrated minorities which turned the tide of history. It may be that as we are more urgently challenged by our redemptive calling, we shall be less proud to be members of the church and more earnestly determined to be worthy of her past and of her destiny.

One other illustration may suffice to indicate the high cost to every party concerned of this habit of measuring values by ourselves rather than by the standards of right. Consider, then, the myth of racial superiority and what it costs humanity every day and every week and every month. There is probably no greater single evil plaguing mankind at the present time than race prejudice, combining under its aegis as it does every shade of cruelty and baseness and abomination known to man. Yet the self-regarding idea that one race is intrinsically better than another persists, despite the fact that it is founded on prejudice and self-interest, and with it goes the twin idea that the superior races have superior rights to the good things of the earth. No well-informed person suggests that racial differences be ignored. That would be a worse than empty gesture. Racial differences are deep and significant, and must be taken into account by any realist. But exclusive racial pride is another thing. This must go into the discard if we are to lift the horizons of our understanding. Until it does, the "master races" of the world will continue to rob themselves of the riches which friendly contacts with other peoples would give. Stanley Jones, who has worked for many years among various backward races, says that nothing but the love of Christ has enriched him so much as his inter-racial friendships have done. He says that race pride is suicide.

Pride is a poison, which makes even the vices more loathsome than they were before, until no one can be found to defend the man who takes pride in his drunkenness or who boasts about his amorous conquests. And because it nourishes pride, extravagant or unmerited praise is also to be looked on with suspicion. There is a story that the Italian *Duce* once asked a French chemical

expert what is the most subtle and dangerous gas yet discovered. To Mussolini's surprise the expert answered, "It is an old one, *signor*, called incense." The expert was right. Extravagant praise prepares the way for congratulation to be preferred before instruction, for popularity to be substituted for excellence, and for sycophants to be welcomed as counselors. It is hardly to be wondered at that when the people of Lystra wanted to do homage to Paul and Barnabas, these discerning men of God "rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, *Sirs*, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you."<sup>2</sup>

What antidote can be found for a poison as insidious as this? Certainly it is not likely to be found in further isolation from our fellows, but rather in a richer sympathy and a finer fellowship with all mankind. It is recorded that when Ezra found that his countrymen in Jerusalem had gone into mixed marriages against the express command of Divinity, a thing for which he was in no way responsible, he nevertheless fell on his knees and cried out, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for *our* iniquities are increased."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps this self-identification with his people at the point of their greatest need is the clue that we are looking for. Certainly it is the clue which was followed by Paul and Barnabas when the crowd sought to worship them at Lystra.

Behind any such self-identification with the needy must be a motive power which we cannot find among thoughtful men who tend to be exclusive, or among thoughtless men who tend to be indifferent. There is one place where we must be thoughtful and where we cannot be proud, and that is in the presence of Divinity. No real worshiper can shut the door of the sanctuary against another would-be worshiper. If he tries to do so, he finds that God himself has withdrawn. Realizing this, Paul wrote to the saints in Galatia: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." John Bowring gave this truth a setting which men have been singing from their hearts for a hundred years:

"In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime."

God is at work now, breaking down the barriers which have divided men from the beginning—barriers of class, and race, and distance, and understanding. Let not pride interfere with so great a work.

"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In *If I Were a Preacher*, page 18, Cassell and Company, Ltd. <sup>2</sup> Acts 14: 14.  
<sup>3</sup> Ezra 9: 6. <sup>4</sup> I Corinthians 1: 26-31.

## ENEMIES OF FAITH

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### HATRED

AS THESE NOTES ARE BEING prepared, two significant ideas which are in fundamental conflict with each other are being entertained at the same time by many well-meaning people. They are the idea of building a new and better world order, and the idea of meeting out vindictive punishment to their enemies. No one can build a new and worthy world order unless the new order shall be permeated by a finer spirit and a nobler purpose than has moved men hitherto. Hate is as old as the world itself; but it never built anything worth building. On the contrary, it has corroded and destroyed the finest things that life has known. It was a potent factor in Cain's murder of Abel, and if left to its own devices it will kill the new order before it is fully born.

It could be argued with some show of reason that millions of men have greater cause for hatred today than ever before. Never before have so many defenseless people been maimed and ruined; never before has such malevolent ingenuity served the cause of destruction; never before have so many millions been united in bitterness by such able and thrice-armed misrepresentation. Yet to permit hatred to have its way will enthrone the spirit of revenge for another generation, at best, and so perpetuate down the years the worst possible resultants of past strife; and it will do all this with no compensating good whatever.

If punishment is to be meted out to the guilty, let us remember that among the most cherished achievements of free men is a sense of justice; and in the light of this memory let us ponder the reasons which have led judicially minded men to arrange for a change of venue whenever there has been a possibility that passion might interfere with justice. Just men want this protection even for those they believe to be guilty. Unless it is guaranteed, they themselves feel guilty. To whom can world criminals appeal for a change of venue? By the very nature of the situation they

can appeal nowhere but to God; and he already has their cases in hand. "Vengeance belongeth unto me. I will recompense, saith the Lord, . . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of living God."<sup>1</sup>

Let us consider the nature of hatred. It is frequently intertwined with envy and jealousy and rivalry, and is readily fostered by tabloid thinking about "spies" and "traitors" and "capitalists" and "scabs" and the like. This has always been so. The Apostles James and John once went into a Samaritan village to secure lodging for Jesus and his company, but the Samaritans saw that they were Jews and refused them hospitality. In the twinkling of an eye the "sons of thunder" turned and said to Jesus, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them."<sup>2</sup> The two apostles were probably weary, and thought with dismay of the difficulty of securing rooms elsewhere; but none of these things explains their sudden and passionate bitterness. That was an outgrowth of generations of resentment. The Jews ordinarily had no dealings with the Samaritans. Now that James and John had sought to break the taboo, they had been repulsed. In a moment, apostleship and even common decency were forgotten. "Let us burn them out, root and branch," they said. That is hatred—resentment piled up, covered up, festering, and then lashing out with no restraint or sense of proportion. Hatred is devilish.

Hatred is akin to anger. But where anger tends to be immediate and directly related to its cause, hatred is a delayed action bomb, and is usually only indirectly related to what brought it about. Indeed, while anger tends to vent itself against its cause, and then to be gone like a storm which has blown itself out, hatred is a smouldering fire which scorches everything in the vicinity, and may not burst into flame until some small wind of passion ignites it long after the original spark is forgotten. The angry man wants to punish his tormentor; the vindictive man wants to satisfy his hatred. There is a world of difference between the two. It is recorded that Jesus gave his disciples power



over unclean spirits. Surely we need power today to cast out the evil demons of malice and envy and hatred and greed.

A proclamation has gone forth from some of our leaders that we must learn to hate in order that we may fight well; but others of our outstanding psychologists are joining the ministry in pointing out the fallacy of this point of view. Hatred is unintelligent; it is aggressive emotion which jettisons poise and judgment and clear thinking in favor of corrosive resentment. It breeds suspicion where there is no cause for suspicion and disturbance where there is no cause for disturbance. It has definite, traceable, and harmful bodily effects. It forgets principles and remembers only persons and wrongs. It regiments men on the lowest possible plane; and leaves a residue which must be cleaned out before there is any hope of constructive justice as a watchword of future fellowship.

Hatred will not be eliminated by denouncing it. Something much more fundamental than that must take place. We must get down to root causes and go to work on them. This means that we shall have to concern ourselves with problems of wealth and poverty, of unemployment and underemployment, of housing and vacations and leisure, of the rankling sense of the injustice of the existing social order, of the ostentatious display of wealth, of racial and national differences, of access to natural resources, of free trade or protection, of standards of living in far places—of freedom and justice and equity and truth.

But we cannot in a moment build this new world from which all personal and class and national animosities have been eliminated, so as to be free to start afresh in a hate-free environment. Hatred is ultimately rooted in the nature of persons and not in social and economic procedures, important though these may be. A hateful man would do hateful things, even if he should wander by mistake into the inner courts of heaven. The problems which we have listed, and others like them, will never be solved until there is let loose in the world a spirit which is manifested in consistent attitudes of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,

meekness, and temperance,<sup>3</sup> and which endures in the confident faith that these are more potent in the long run than hatred, bitterness, strife, impatience, cruelty, ruthlessness, and greed. God's problem in eliminating hatred is with the man who hates, even more than with the man who is hated. If the hater continues to hate, he will be damned, for to let hatred rule one's life is damnation. That is why James Weldon Johnson has called for the eradication of lynching in the United States, "to save Black America's body and White America's soul."<sup>4</sup>

As far back as the time of Jonah the prophet, men of God have seen the wicked foolishness of hatred. Jonah was commanded to go to Nineveh and there preach the gospel of repentance. Jonah was not a coward, and he was not afraid to go to Nineveh. But the Ninevites were the implacable enemies of his own people, and Jonah hated them. He was not willing to forgive them, and did not want to preach to them lest they should repent and be welcomed back into the family of God's children. So Jonah tried to run away to Tarshish; and it was only when he found how hard it was to escape his duty that he went grudgingly to do it. Even after his first day's preaching had led to the conversion of many of the Ninevites, Jonah was still resentful. He went to the east side of the city and camped there to watch what God would do. As he sat waiting, a gourd grew up near him and gave him shade from the hot sun, but during the night a worm attacked the root of the gourd so that by morning Jonah's shade was gone. Then, as Jonah's anger grew, the voice of God came to him, "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured; neither madest it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" When once Jonah realized the great investment of Divinity even in such people as the Ninevites, his hatred looked childish.

Strange as it may at first appear, we have the highest possible

warrant for believing that to meet scorn and contumely with love and service is the neighborly thing to do. It was only a short time after he and his disciples had been refused the hospitality of their village by some Samaritans that Jesus made a Samaritan the hero of one of his most delightful stories. That story of the good Samaritan has opened our eyes to the meaning of neighborliness; but what an influence it must have had on the despised Samaritans.

In India in the past few years, a new and living version of this parable has been set forth. Gandhi has declared that no one who deliberately oppresses his own countrymen can rightfully complain of the oppression of foreign rulers; and so he has led the way in the liberation of sixty million "untouchables," who prior to that time were the social and economic outcasts of his land. To make his principle clear and impressive, he took it into his own home. Although Gandhi is himself a member of one of the higher castes he adopted into his own family a little girl from one of the "untouchable" families. What tremendous strength an act like that has given to the movement for free India, and what a body blow it has given to caste hatred which has been piling up for countless generations.

The heaven-sent antidote for the poison of hatred is brotherly love. This is no easy and spineless sentiment, but is akin to the love of a good doctor or a good teacher or a good policeman or any man who adds to his special training and his clean-cut facing of facts a grim determination to bring salvation to the needy. Nor is such love to be had for the asking. But it can be cultivated in the presence of Jesus. Indeed, it was from Jesus that the best of men have learned how to defeat hatred with love. Surely, whenever hatred can thus be overcome, we have a firm footing for our faith that a new and better world order can yet be built. The actual conquest of hatred is one of the surest possible prophecies of the coming of the kingdom.

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 10: 30, 31. <sup>2</sup> Luke 9: 51-56. <sup>3</sup> Galatians 5: 22, 23. <sup>4</sup> *Along This Way*, Viking Press.

## ENEMIES OF FAITH

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### IGNORANCE

**A**MONG THE MANY DIFFICULT TASKS confronting us today is that of discovering the truth and making it our own. Indeed, a strong case could be made out for the affirmation that this is the most difficult task of all. In proportion as we win through to understanding, and so come to know the truth, we become both free and powerful. But our way is hedged about by all manner of traditions and superstitions and prejudices and hidden fears which tend to distort our vision or to blind us completely. These, in turn, are augmented by such acknowledged difficulties as laziness, sheer inability to see beyond the appearance of things, the high cost of experimentation, errors in recording, and similar impediments. Yet we are all under obligation to seek the truth, for truth is knowledge of things as they are seen by God, whose intelligence alone is all-informed and undistorted. To fight truth is to fight what God holds precious; and to understand the truth is to share the vision of the Eternal. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."<sup>1</sup> Men of faith have given much thought to the heights and the depths of life; but they still need to explore its broader reaches with God.

God hates ignorance because it ministers to slavery; indeed, ignorance *is* slavery. There was good reason for Peter to admonish the saints to add knowledge to their faith. Faith and knowledge work as a team in blazing the trail for freedom. It is difficult to realize the slavery to toil and disease and ignorance and superstition which was taken for granted before the advent of the modern era of machinery and printing and communication and scientific medicine and dietetics. Continuing our enfranchise-

ment, the new knowledge which is even now being won promises that men who want to be free can be more than ever before free from slavery to local prejudices and the opinions of other men, and to the sway of demagogues.

Of course, there are various levels of knowledge and understanding; and it is quite possible for a man to be free on a lower level and yet to be enslaved on a higher level. A skillful workman may be so ignorant of business procedure that when he goes to work for himself his skill is wasted and his family ruined. And, further, no knowledge by itself, on no matter what level, is fully adequate for life. The skillful workman may be as basely betrayed by his own appetites as by his lack of additional knowledge.

Life is essentially one. For purposes of convenience we may study the sciences and arts and languages separately; but they are amazingly interrelated and advance in any one field soon results in parallel advances in related fields made possible by this underlying kinship. There are few vocations, if any, in which we are not using methods and materials which were unknown a generation ago. The doctor obviously needs to know much of anatomy and physiology and *materia medica*, but he also needs to know some biology and some physics and some chemistry and some psychology and a foreign language or two. His work is constantly made easier, and his skill is continually freed from petty limitations, by the new discoveries of the metallurgist and the expert in plastics and the electrician and a dozen others. The more important a man's work is and the wider its ramifications, the more likely he is to depend on the knowledge of others to make possible the extension of his own knowledge and skill. The aim of the scientist nowadays must be narrowed down as much as possible, so that he may learn all he possibly can about his restricted field; but the knowledge of the scientist must also be made as wide as possible if he is to relate his specialty to the total field. The path which he follows may be narrow, but many other paths run into it and out of it, and it has wide vistas.

Because the business of living is so intimately interrelated, so that knowledge gained in any one field is of value in any other, it is important that persons who wish to live richly shall be in sympathetic contact with life at as many points as possible. Life today is enriched by an understanding of life as it has been in the past—its trends, its dangers, its allies, and its resources. And life in any one place is broadened and uplifted by sympathetic insight into life elsewhere in other countries, among other types of workers, under different economic systems.

These facts do not demand that any man who desires to live greatly shall have a formal education. Many a man with an advanced degree from a great university has merely become acquainted with a multitude of facts; whereas the university was established to offer him an introduction to expansive life. As a result he is less truly educated than the man who never attended a university but who has welcomed life with friendly curiosity. But the facts do require this healthy and sympathetic curiosity, this eagerness for knowledge, as a condition of broad understanding and constructive living. The man who has looked backward with the great historians and around him with the great scientists may not be intrinsically better than the man who has never been fired with a passion to know; but if he is not better, it is because he has some marked deficiency in some other part of his life. He has many more opportunities to see God at work and to feel the upsurgings of faith in a greater tomorrow than has the man who has kept his mind at home, and who never knew the delights of "imagineering" into strange fields of life and knowledge.

Ignorance in any legitimate field of inquiry is an enemy to pioneering faith. Knowledge, on the other hand, is a potential friend of vast power. The world is in need of men and women who are already prospective citizens of a world that is struggling to be born. Many of these men and women are breadwinners, who must work hard for their living. But that is no reason why they should not add to their technical skills the insight into the

greatness of the human spirit which comes from history and literature and music, or the sense of creative energy at work which can come from the sciences. Anyone who cares enough to do so can make friends with a glorious company of the immortals from Pericles and Socrates and Plato and Aristotle in ancient times to Lincoln and Gladstone and Wagner and Tennyson and Ruskin and Browning and Einstein and Edison and their fellows in recent generations.

If we are to be worthily free, there are some things which it is helpful or even important for us to know, and others of which knowledge is all but imperative. The ancient Greeks gave much time and thought to deciding what knowledge is most important; and some of their greatest philosophers gave first rank to self-knowledge. Over the entrance to the gate of the temple at Delphi was carved the maxim, "Know thyself." Socrates approved this injunction when he said, "I must first know myself, as the Delphian inscription says. To be anxious about that which is not my business, while I am still in ignorance of myself, would be ridiculous." Socrates felt that the highest wisdom is displayed in properly assessing one's own ignorance. In our own day the importance of self-knowledge is again being emphasized; and many a salesman, and many a doctor, and many a psychiatrist, and many a sociologist rate knowledge of man as the highest type of knowledge to which man can attain. "Ignorance of himself," they say, "is man's greatest handicap in the science and art of living."

Knowledge of man, of his interests and motives and joys and fears, is certainly of major importance. But Jesus, the greatest practical philosopher of all time, has taught us that it is impossible to know man fully except as he is known in relation to God. Our physical and mental and spiritual structure and powers were determined so as to conform to a definite purpose. We are made as we are because we have specific functions to fulfill; and we are not made like horses or geraniums or automobiles because we were made for a different purpose than horses or ge-

raniums or automobiles. To know ourselves, then, we must know the reason for our creation—not just the reason which can be answered by tracing our origins, but also the reason which is only answered by unfolding our destiny. To know ourselves fully we must share the mind of Divinity and see ourselves as God sees us. To be ignorant in this field is to meet disaster. To fail at this point is to fail all along the line.

A little while ago we noted that all of life is interrelated; that truth in one field is important in all fields. Facts which are discovered in one relationship throw a flood of light on apparently unconnected problems which have long been dark. If ignorance is the enemy of faith in some less important fields, then here it is a mortal foe. If we lack knowledge of God and of the divine purpose which conditioned our creation, then we lack insight in every field at the very point where insight is most needed; if we do not know God, then we do not know the reason for anything. And yet how much of light is thrown over the whole of life, everywhere, when knowledge of God and of his purpose for mankind is widely shared!

It is of great importance to us to realize, therefore, that it has been ordained by the grace of God that knowledge at this most crucial point shall be available to all men, shining forth as a bright star to guide them in the way of life. Such knowledge is not reserved to the wise and the learned and the wealthy; none of these have any prior claims. But it is reserved for those who are in moral earnest, and who will go where the light leads. The light thus made available is intended to guide men into all truth, illuminating lesser truths by its own shining splendor. To block it off at any point is to sin against both light and truth.



## ENEMIES OF FAITH

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### INDIFFERENTISM

WE HAVE SAID THAT FAITH IS AN assurance shared by men of God as a result of which they gladly join in fulfilling the divine purpose in creation; and we have seen that such faith has many enemies. From among these enemies we have taken especial note of ignorance and pride and hatred; although we might well have lumped these enemies together in the general observation that what is not of faith is sin. But it seems that one other dangerous enemy ought to be noted, partly because so much of the strength of this enemy is derived from his guise as a nonbeligent. The enemy I have in mind is closely akin to indifference, but is even more subtly disguised than indifference. I refer to indifferentism, which is the name given to the attitude that we do not need to search diligently for truth in the spiritual realm; that what a man believes is not really important; that deeds are what matter, not creeds.

Indifferentism is frequently thought of as broad-mindedness and tolerance. Unfortunately it is more truly described as a form of moral and intellectual irresponsibility. It is about as sensible to say that it does not matter what we believe about God and man and sin and redemption, as it is to say that it does not matter what we believe about electricity and germs and communism. Indifferentism, moreover, is a travesty on freedom; for no man is free to believe what he pleases. Of course, no attempt should be made to force a man to believe just what another man believes; but the reason for this is that right belief is so overwhelmingly important that we must not do anything which might rob the group of the new vision of truth which some spiritual rebel might win for us. Freedom of belief is not free-

dom to get the best kind of living out of any kind of believing, any more than freedom to plant gardens is freedom to get the best kind of carrots out of any kind of seed.

Freedom of belief is not an end in itself. It is an instrument for forging rightness of belief. That is the goal. To believe what is not true is still disastrous, even though the state refuses to interfere with such wrong belief except when it leads to obviously antisocial actions. When the state guarantees freedom of belief and worship, therefore, the state is really declaring that things of the spirit are beyond state control, and not that every man should consider himself free to believe what he wishes to believe, and that no man should seek to change the belief or mode of worship of his neighbor. In a nutshell, the guarantee of freedom of belief means recognition that belief and worship lie in the realm of the spirit; and that they must therefore be influenced by spiritual forces if they are to be influenced at all.

This is of the very nature of truth. The truth exists apart from the number of its devotees. If ten men or a hundred men or ten million men believe that what is really untrue is true, their belief does not in any way change the facts. The truths of the spiritual realm cannot be adjusted to meet the wishes of the majority, and then readjusted when majority opinion changes. On the contrary, the truth commands good men with an authority which is at first perceived only by the few, but which later comes to be shared by the vast majority of men of good will. Those who first recognize and respond to the authority of truth are the prophets and martyrs of our race; and it is significant that the prophets have so frequently been martyrs also. It is so much more easy to conform than to pioneer, and to abuse the prophets than to appreciate their message.

The tremendous efforts being made by the nations recently at war trace back to their respective devotion to certain conflicting beliefs. Indeed, this is so true that it has been said that these fundamental beliefs are themselves in conflict. One group of beliefs is held by a great proportion of the citizenry of the demo-

cratic nations, although apparently with a less passionate devotion than might be desired. The conflicting group of beliefs is held less freely but apparently more passionately by the citizens of the enemy nations. But though these two sets of political dogmas are in such violent contrast, no one suggests that they are unimportant, or that in these fields it does not matter what one believes. It is just because they know belief to be of major importance that belligerents maintain such towering propaganda agencies. That is why some ministers of religion were inducted as chaplains and others were exempted from military service, and why some nonconformists were sent to prison and others to concentration camps. Governments at war have no use for political indifferentism.

Against such a background it at once becomes apparent that men who believe that God is seeking to bring into being a world order nearer to his heart's desire must be concerned about what other men believe; about the basic doctrines on which personal and national and international life are builded. Indeed, the man of faith must be an evangelist. He must seek to propagate those fundamental truths about man and society which grow out of the most fundamental truth of all, the truth about God.

Millions of men and women on both sides of the recent world conflict are finding peace in the midst of chaos because of their feeling of solidarity with their countrymen and with men of like faith in other countries, and out of their feeling of the supreme importance of what they are now doing. This war was so all-encompassing that it left little room for lesser considerations. We live under something akin to a dictatorship of events; and instead of being tossed about by every current of thought and interest, we are caught up in the tidal movement of great doings and feel the surge of their power within us. But these world-shaking events will not last forever. History has one great lesson for us in this connection. We are being borne forward today on a wave of endeavor stimulated by the magnitude of the events going on all the time and all about us; but unless some

new and surging wave of moral purpose shall uplift us as the present emergency passes we shall soon sink back into the trough of moral exhaustion.

This is what occurred after the close of the First World War. Our only salvation lies in a faith far greater than nationalism can give us. In the words of Edith Cavell, "Patriotism is not enough." Not even an emotional attachment to the ongoing purpose of Divinity will satisfy our deep need. Heart and mind and strength must be involved. We must live by the light of our deep convictions concerning the rightful moral sovereignty of God in all the affairs of men and of nations; and we must work out and apply the ethical standards which this sovereignty demands. Those who are indifferent to such a movement are indifferent to the currents which determine the trends of life, and which must be taken into account if we are ever to reach port safely.

It is indifference to the basic importance of the sovereignty of God that has undermined the ethical standards of our time. Lack of clear convictions about God and man and society have led to debased ethical standards in marriage and business and community relations as well as in government. This relation between right-thinking about ultimates and right-acting in daily affairs has always held true. The early Christians, for example, inherited from the Jews a deep conviction about the coming of the kingdom of God on earth. This was purified and enriched under the ministry of the Master, and became one of the regulative dogmas of the church. But under the influence of Greek and Roman thought, which had no such expectation, the doctrine of the kingdom was gradually abandoned; and in its place was substituted an almost exclusive emphasis on the life to come. As a direct result, only those ethical values were given emphasis which seemed to serve the purpose of the life hereafter; and for more than a thousand years the social ethics which grow out of the doctrine of the kingdom were given little if any attention.

In a letter written toward the close of his ministry, the Apostle

Peter admonished the saints concerning their faith. This familiar admonition has been expressed somewhat differently in the revised version and the authorized version. The later version has Peter say, "In your faith supply virtue, and in your virtue knowledge." Dr. Moffatt follows the lead given here, and his rendition is, "make it your whole concern to furnish your faith with resolution, resolution with intelligence."<sup>1</sup> There are two very interesting points raised by this changed wording. The first is that virtue and knowledge and temperance and the other Christian graces which are mentioned are not just added to faith, but spring out of it. Faith is the root from which they grow. The second is that the Greek word which the authorized version renders "add" and for which the revised version uses "supply" and which Dr. Moffatt translates "furnish" has a fascinating history, knowledge of which helps to make Peter's meaning clear. This word takes us back to Athens in the days when it was a high honor to be asked to defray the cost of a public ceremony. Peter took this idea into the field of religion, and encouraged the saints to consider it a high honor that, after God has given them so many reasons for faith, they should help to meet the cost of sustaining this faith in their own lives by expressing it in moral courage, and in an intelligent approach to the problems of life, and in the other ways here indicated. Indeed, to fail to sustain the cost of our faith by furnishing the moral courage and the intelligence which are appropriate to it is to stultify that faith from the beginning. To the man of faith, the suggestion that it does not matter what we believe about God's attitude toward sin and judgment and the kingdom is a suggestion that faith does not need to become fruitful in knowledge, but that the root of faith can bear any kind of fruit it may desire. That way lies spiritual nihilism.

For altogether too many of us, our faith is only a vague idea that God will take care of us no matter what betide. That kind of faith as between father and son has ruined many a young man who never realized until too late that life is a demanding busi-

ness. That kind of faith as between God and man will ruin any man unless God can startle him awake. God is eager to take care of us; but the only way that he can do this is to stand by us as we learn the basic facts of life and what these facts mean in terms of daily life. It matters tremendously, therefore, what a man believes about God and his purposes for man. It is a major disaster when some man or some nation gets the wrong idea about God or about the relation between God and man, and builds a life or a national policy on that wrong belief. The only antidote for the recurrent disasters of this kind, disasters which might easily overtake us even as they have overtaken others, is in faith and work and worship and testimony, with God and for God.

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<sup>1</sup> II Peter 1: 5.

# THY KINGDOM COME

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## THE PATTERN OF THE KINGDOM

NOWHERE IS THE POWER OF THE spoken word more apparent than in certain of the phrases which have come to mean a great deal to the people of their time; and so have become landmarks of history. Some of these phrases express the life purposes of great men, as Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death," and John Wesley's, "The world is my parish." Others point the way for a whole nation, as did Woodrow Wilson's, "Making the world safe for democracy." But no phrase has ever warmed the hearts of good men down the generations so much as, "The kingdom of God." In one guise or another, the basic idea of the kingdom has been struggling for recognition from the beginning of time.

The reason for the appeal of the kingdom is not far to seek. The essential idea involves God and man in a multitude of rich social relationships. It involves the king and his subjects and the laws of their common life and their means of communion and all their business together. It has to do with the nature of God and man both individually and socially. It has to do with ideals and realities; with the present and the future; with things as they are, as they should be, and as they are becoming.

The phrase, "The kingdom of God," had a long history even before the advent of Jesus. It is impossible to approach God without catching some glimpse of the kingdom in the radiance of his presence. So, if we are to seek its origin, we must go back beyond the earth life of the Master, beyond the prophets, beyond Moses and Abraham and Enoch and Adam himself. The idea of the kingdom has existed in the mind of God from the beginning.

When we consider the many fine adjustments which must be made within every living organism in order that each and every part shall function adequately and in proper relation to all other parts, it seems preposterous to suggest that all this came about by accident; and that the creator merely tinkered with life until he hit upon something that worked. On the contrary, there must have been some pattern in creation, some idea of the final goal; and it must have been there from the beginning. A frog must have been in mind before the first tadpole lost his tail, and a butterfly before the first caterpillar fell asleep. So, also, there must have been some pattern for history in the mind of God long before the first hesitating step was taken in the march down the centuries. God created men with purpose, and this means that from the beginning the mark of our high calling was set for man in the mind of Divinity.

The intervention of Divinity in the shaping of history clearly indicates the reality and the commanding excellence of this divine purpose. If there had been no such "shape of things to come" in the mind of God, his intervention would have been an intrusion, and might even have been an impertinence; men at least *think* they are going somewhere, and if he has no better place for them to go, even God has no moral right to interfere in their plans. Yet he has intervened; and his intervention points to a definite purpose which from the hints given by history, is gradually becoming clear to all men.

But think for a moment of the terrible responsibility which is imposed on Divinity by this power to intervene in the affairs of sentient beings. When should he step in? Whenever anyone is hurt? No! We learn some of our greatest lessons by way of pain. Whenever anyone is wrong? No! That would in time rob us all of any effective agency. When, then, if ever? There is only one answer. Even God does not have the moral right to intervene in the affairs of men, except when this intervention is necessary for the attainment or protection of some good which is greater than any purely personal good, however desirable, or



than any merely momentary good, however widely sought. He must protect the best interests of everyone whenever these ultimate interests are in conflict with the secondary interests of anyone. And to do this he must have a clear picture of that pattern of life into which all can fit with the greatest possible individual and corporate freedom and power and joy in living. This ideal pattern for humanity is the kingdom; and the kingdom is the goal of the divine endeavor in man. We were made to live happily and effectively first, as brothers and sisters in the family of God, and finally as citizens of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God has existed, then, from the beginning as an idea and a pattern in the heart and mind of Divinity. This is not to say that it has been only a dream. The truth about the kingdom is like any other truth by which the world operates but only part of which we have yet come to know. Much of truth still awaits discovery; but this undiscovered truth is already active. Truth is, and truth functions. We find it and adjust ourselves to it, and we live more richly by reason of this adjustment; but the truth was there long before we even thought of looking for it. So, also, the truth about God in relation to men is already active; it is the pattern to which we were built—the spiritual creation which has preceded the material creation, but which even now is seeking to become visible in the relationships of men and women of intelligent good will.

There is what Canon Streeter calls "an inner coherence" between the fact that God has a plan for mankind and the fact that he has raised up exceptional men of insight whom we call "prophets." There were Enoch, the builder of Zion; Abraham, the friend of God; Moses, the liberator of his people; Isaiah, the courtier; Amos, the shepherd; Jeremiah, the small town man of education; Micah, the farmer; and many others whose joint testimony spans the years. These men were different in every conceivable way except in their intense conviction that they had been commissioned to declare the word of God to men of less acute spiritual insight. Despite their differences, they were truly great

men; and they were great because of their message. And at the heart of every outstanding prophetic message stood some truth about God and about his purpose for humanity; some disclosure of the divine pattern for the common life of mankind.<sup>1</sup> The prophets saw the truth about spiritual things as Newton and Pasteur and Einstein saw the truth about material things, long before these truths became visible to the average man. Moreover, they all shared a conviction that the outcome of history is in the control of Divinity, and that everything out of harmony with the divine pattern for humanity must sooner or later give way to that which God can approve.

Many of the events anticipated by the prophets did not come to pass within their own lifetimes, nor in the lifetimes of their prophetic successors. The mountain of the Lord's house was not exalted above the hills in their day, nor did the nations then flow unto it. Egypt was not brought to the feet of Jehovah in their time, nor did she lead Assyria into the way of truth. The ideal future anticipated by Jeremiah did not dawn immediately after the years of captivity were ended, nor were the hopes of Isaiah fulfilled then.<sup>2</sup> The return was itself on a much smaller scale than had been hoped for. Yet these men of God still spoke with confidence of Zion; of the moral foundations of the kingdom; and of the doom of wickedness in high places. They knew in their souls, because they had come to know God, that God had chosen realities which seemed to have no actual existence to bring to nought powers which had no moral right to exist.<sup>3</sup> If they doubted about details, they knew that these details were at least symbolic of the truth which was too marvelous for their full apprehension. And in the strength of this faith they called on all men to live confidently in the light of the better tomorrows which are guaranteed by God.

The prophets never made the mistake of presuming that the kingdom can be built, or that society can be perfectly organized, by the steady improvement of the social order. They were covenant minded, and expected Zion to be crowned with glory as a

result of the covenant-keeping of the people of God. Some of the greatest of them saw that the day would come when the people of other nations would be asked and permitted to share the glories of the kingdom. But without exception they conceived redemption as the result of obedience; and always God was recognized as its effective cause. "I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts," said Jeremiah in the name of the Lord, "and, they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."<sup>4</sup>

Jesus was the greatest of the prophets, and the light of his life outshone the light coming from these others as a modern arc light outshines the light of a flickering candle. Because of this, his message was directed from the beginning toward a richer proclamation of the kingdom. From his point of vantage, he saw the building of the kingdom as the obvious and necessary resultant of genuine faith in God. He saw clearly, moreover, that stable achievement in kingdom-building is rooted in worship. All other attempts to build the kingdom are grounded in the human will, and are therefore like trying to induce the whole social order to lift itself by its bootstraps. With this in mind, Jesus taught his disciples to pray daily for the coming of the kingdom; and after two thousand years there is no richer spiritual exercise than to meditate on the kingdom implications of the phrases of that prayer. No other prayer approaches the Lord's prayer in balance and unity and breadth and depth and in sheer beauty. The program for the divine order of society is here rooted in recognition of our relation to Divinity; the hallowed sanctity of his nature; our earthly status as a colony of heaven; our need for bread and forgiveness and deliverance, and, above all, for finding all these together, under his guidance, in the kingdom on earth.

<sup>1</sup> See, especially Genesis 9: 22-28, Inspired Version. <sup>2</sup> Isaiah 41: 1ff; 45: 1ff; 60: 1ff; Jeremiah 29: 10; Ezekiel 29: 13-21, etc. <sup>3</sup> I Corinthians 1: 28. <sup>4</sup> Jeremiah 31: 31-34; see also Isaiah 2: 3; 4: 4-6; 55: 6-11; 59: 21, etc.

## THY KINGDOM COME

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### THE TRUE SOCIAL ORDER

WHAT ARE THE OUTSTANDING characteristics of the social order which exists in the heart and mind of Divinity; and which has been glimpsed and proclaimed by the prophets? The first and most distinctive is God himself, who rules as king by right of his own greatness and the willing allegiance of his own people. Even when the children of Israel looked forward with eager anticipation to the permanent establishment of the throne of David, they recognized that the power behind the throne was God, who said, "I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me a house and I will establish his throne forever. I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever."<sup>1</sup>

Jesus taught his followers to think of God as their Heavenly Father; but while this teaching brought God very near to all of them, it was never allowed to detract from the sense of the Father's rightful sovereignty. There might have been some difficulty in maintaining this dual sense of intimacy and aloofness if the disciples had been merely philosophers; but there was no difficulty so long as they were also worshipers. They prayed, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," and as they prayed, the Spirit gave them understanding. While the love of God brought him very near, the holiness of God filled them with awe and banished forever any sense of familiarity such as would incline them to ask for favors that were inconsistent with the all-embracing goodness of Divinity.

The idea of a kingdom inevitably includes the subjects as well as the sovereign. But the members of this kingdom are not merely sub-

jects, but citizens in the larger sense; subjects of the king, but also citizens of the kingdom. From the first the requirements of citizenship were at once liberal and exclusive. Since the kingdom is the pattern of life for men in relation to each other, all men are created to belong to it; but unfortunately all men have at some time given their allegiance elsewhere. This has not been a temporary transfer of loyalty but has been age-long and social; and their treason against God has changed the very nature of those who have been guilty. So, while kingdom citizenship is open to all, and all who will come are eagerly welcomed, the return involves more than a change of mind. It involves a soul-searching change of loyalties so complete and so far-reaching as to constitute a new birth. The citizen of the kingdom does not just decide to be different. God makes the approach to him; and under this divine tutelage, rebellious man senses his own frustration and moral futility and offers himself to God for the regeneration which is vitally necessary if the character of the kingdom is to be maintained. And this rebirth does actually take place. If the new man still bears traces of his unregenerate nature, he is nevertheless filled with a new spirit and a new life which guide him ever upward and away from his old self, even as the natural man steadily widens the gap between himself and the lesser animals.

In view of the holiness of Divinity, and of the social nature of the kingdom, it was inevitable that the prophets of the kingdom should sound an exalted ethical note. Amos decried wealth and wickedness, and Isaiah and Micah not only joined in this denunciation but added aristocracy to wealth. They were concerned with economics and with questions of privilege, because these matters concerned men, and God is interested in mankind. Anticipating by many centuries the modern theory of the economic determination of history, the prophets proposed, or rather announced, the fact of the moral determination of history. They saw the time coming when no man would be wronged by another, when the strong would share with the weak, when no individual would be sacrificed for impersonal ends, but when every man would shape his life freely and happily in relation to the good of all men. But the dominant note throughout all of this was not

protection and security and economic stability; it was life with God. These men of prophetic vision saw that there would be no end to the exploitation of men by their fellows until the moral sensitivity of the group is quickened through intimacy with Divinity. They saw that if the kingdom is to be built, it must be constructed of materials and by methods which are congenial to its nature.<sup>2</sup>

In due time, John the Baptist came and confirmed the expectations of his people with his proclamation that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; but in the next breath he proclaimed that Israel was as yet morally unfit for the kingdom and must participate in a deep and searching act of repentance and rededication, which was properly symbolized in the baptism which he taught. When the Master took over the kingdom ministry from John, his preaching was more kindly but even more searching than that of his forerunner. His most scathing denunciations were reserved for men who regarded themselves as superior and specially favored of the Lord; and he treated avarice and pride and injustice as sins against God and against humanity. Taking his stand with the poor and the humble, he invited them to find their rest in him, knowing their great value to God;<sup>3</sup> and he preached that there is at the heart of things a power which makes for righteousness.

The Jews of the time of Jesus were socially minded. They thought of salvation as well-being and peace and victory within the kingdom, since this was part of their heritage. Their strong sense of community life went with them into the early church under the direction of the apostles, where "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer."<sup>4</sup> This was not primarily because of any rule among them, but because of the spirit which dwelt in their hearts, and because of their new-found sense of brotherhood under God. Being possessed of this spirit, it was natural for them to have all things common and to sell their possessions and bring the money for use in the common treasury.<sup>5</sup> As a matter of fact, the common treasury system in Jerusalem failed, and the Jewish Christians there had to be helped by their brethren in other church centers; but the spirit of their fellowship has never been surpassed.

When this spirit is wedded to understanding and experience it cannot fail.

James, the Lord's brother, took it for granted that in the Christian communities there would be joyful sharing for the common good and that this would eliminate the differences between rich and poor.<sup>8</sup> Pride and ambition and respect of persons were all denounced by him because they were violations of the spirit and nature of brotherhood under God. Every man was expected to work and to support his aged or helpless relatives, as a privilege of community life. But those without resources had a claim on the common treasury maintained by the willing contributions of those who had more than they needed. It is small wonder that in this practical fraternity "there were neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, barbarians, Scythians, bond, nor free."

The kingdom life is a life of new allegiance and new outlook and new expectations; of new poise and new power and new assurance that all things can be made to work together for good to those who love the Lord. It is life lived in joyous relationship to God and to man. Its vitality and power come from secret springs within. The kingdom is, therefore, "the pure in heart"; it is the reign of God in the individual and corporate life of men. The citizen of the kingdom is at home in the universe which was made for him.

The work of the early Christian church was to transform the world order, which is man-centered, into the kingdom of God, which is God-centered. The early church failed in its immediate purposes; but God is still at work. Largely through the unrecognized working of the Christian spirit of love, and in recognition of the equal worth of all men in the sight of God, gladiatorial games with their inhuman cruelties have become a thing of the past; slavery has been renounced; the position of women in Christian communities has been immeasurably improved; and a new sense of the responsibility of the strong toward the weak has been developed and is extending toward nations as well as toward individuals. We have not yet gone far enough, for "we see not yet all things put under him."<sup>7</sup> Yet our awareness of the kingdom has made us divinely discontented with things as they are. We judge

them in the light of our growing sensitivity to the character of God and the kingdom; and we feel in our hearts that we too, like the prophets of old, have been called to venture forth on a great crusade.

In the thought and experience of the prophets and seers, the kingdom ideal should regulate all human relationships, both those of men to God and those of men to one another. It is the nature of the kingdom to be the center of life, the point of reference by which we measure all things. It loses something vital to its being when it becomes a special interest or moves to the edge of consciousness. As a standard of unity, which becomes constantly clearer as we live more in the light of God, it calls to all of life, maintaining life's fullness and binding it together with the silken cords of the Spirit. While worship is therefore a kingdom activity, it is not the sole kingdom activity; while sharing with each other in the spirit of brotherhood is another kingdom activity, it is but one manifestation of the total kingdom way of living.

The kingdom of God is the supreme good for mankind collectively. The conditions of participation in the kingdom are therefore never national but always personal and moral and spiritual.<sup>8</sup> The kingdom is thus an educative force through worship and experience, and it is set against the educative force exercised by society as it is. The kingdom, by the very fact of the close association of work and worship has become a major creative force in society, leading to the development of a social conscience and the elevation of social standards.

Men of the kingdom look for guidance to the past, and yet not without some suspicion. Mere repetition of the yesterdays, even the best yesterdays, would not be enough to satisfy the deeper needs of humanity in the advancing present. Moreover the real inspiration of the kingdom is in the heart of God. The kingdom will be built when the will of God is done on earth as it is already done in heaven. It is this which makes worship so vitally important. Yet the kingdom is not an unpractical dream, in the sense of being divorced from the actualities of life. It is the reign of God on earth and throughout all of life, ministering to every aspect of man's nature and making



demands on every aspect of his nature. Its rewards, moreover, are not something added, as a medal is given; they are the flowering and fruitage of the kingdom life, as the flower and the fruit are the reward of the plant which bears it. The kingdom has existed since the beginning in the heart of God; it can come to pass on earth as both individuals and society are reborn in his likeness.

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<sup>1</sup> I Chronicles 17: 11, 12, 14. <sup>2</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants* 102: 2. <sup>3</sup> Luke 17: 2; Matthew 18: 14; 25: 31; Luke 22: 14ff; 14: 7ff; 18: 9ff; 16: 13; 11: 52; 16: 19ff etc. <sup>4</sup> Acts 2: 42. <sup>5</sup> Acts 2: 44; 4: 37. <sup>6</sup> James 1: 9. <sup>7</sup> Hebrews 2: 8. <sup>8</sup> Matthew 5: 3; 10: 20; Mark 10: 14, 15.

# THY KINGDOM COME

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## THE PRESENT AND FUTURE KINGDOM

THE IDEA OF THE KINGDOM, AS WE have seen it, was not an evolution but a revelation. It did not develop as the outcome of careful human-planning to meet the social needs of humanity, but it was written into the very structure of human nature. The kingdom purpose of Divinity was itself a factor in our being created as the kind of persons that we are, dependent on each other as well as on God for the fullness of life. It does not envision our regimentation, so that every man fits into a statically conceived pattern which all can meet and which none must excel; but it involves the freedom of every man to pursue his destiny, developing his best possibilities in every direction, under divine guidance and in affectionate co-operation with his neighbors.

Quite early in the experience of the human race a successful experiment in kingdom-building was inaugurated under Enoch, who established the city of Zion. It is noteworthy that even under the comparatively simple conditions of that time the zionic enterprise had to be both selective and educative. In a sense it involved a world evangel, for Enoch sought to include as many as could be persuaded to join him; but since only a comparatively small number were interested, he had to work with this nucleus. And then even this group had much to learn and much to forget. Indeed, we are told that despite the preceding ministry of a line of patriarchs of outstanding moral character and spiritual perception, and the inspiring leadership of Enoch himself, the city of Zion was three hundred and sixty-five years in building.<sup>1</sup>

The zionic hope was kept alive even after the city of Zion "went to heaven," for several of those who had shared in the life of the city remained to call men to repentance.<sup>2</sup> The children of men continued to go their own way, however, and in due time the Lord se-

lected Abraham and his descendants as a distinct and separate people through whose righteousness he designed to bless all the families of the earth.<sup>3</sup> The children of Israel were proudly aware of their high calling, but were unwilling to comply with the conditions of repentance, so that the introduction of the law and the experience of chastisement and captivity and the ministry of a long line of prophets and seers were necessary to bring them to responsible participation in the kingdom enterprise. Even then they fell short in many ways; but the best and most clear sighted of them put their trust in God. And though they did their best to respond in their own day, they looked beyond the faulty current manifestations of kingdom life to the coming era of righteousness when Israel would no longer be rebellious, but would make a new covenant, a covenant of the heart, and would cease from injustice and oppression and dwell in righteousness under the guidance of a greater king than David. Of this coming king, Isaiah prophesied:

"The government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."<sup>4</sup>

The hope of the kingdom was a major factor in making the Jews a great people, recalling them from their many apostasies and provid-

ing a moral standard around which they rallied again and again; to them the promised Messiah did come in the meridian of time to call and lead them in the way of truth. From the beginning of his ministry to its end, the appeal of Jesus was to the Jews, whom he regarded as *the* people of God. He preached throughout the synagogues of Galilee.<sup>5</sup> On each visit to Jerusalem, he went to the Temple and dealt directly with the responsible heads of the Jewish community.<sup>6</sup> Those closest to him quickly came to realize that his reception or rejection by the leaders of Judaism determined whether or not "his own" would receive him.<sup>7</sup> When he sent his disciples to preach in his name they, too, were commanded to address their ministry to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."<sup>8</sup> The great spiritual struggle which culminated in his death arose from his persistent effort to bring Israel to repentance. The disciples knew that this struggle was a warfare between the kingdom of Israel and the sons of the kingdom—between a chosen people unwilling to live up to the high standards of their calling and the Son of God who must reject them if they rejected those standards.

Two things were clear about the kingdom as Jesus proclaimed it: first, that it is primarily the gift of God, to be achieved under his direction and by his power; and second, that this gift of the kingdom is not available to men of sub-kingdom caliber. In this Jesus allied himself with the prophets whose insistent call to righteousness is the greatest glory of ancient Israel. Nothing can take the place of simple goodness, said Jesus. To a people who had excused themselves in their lack of brotherly love on the ground of their common descent from Abraham, Jesus brought an absolutely revolutionary message. He said that such persons must be born again, that they must learn to worship God in spirit and in truth, and that if they brought gifts to the altar and there remembered that their brethren had aught against them, they were to seek forgiveness so as to regain the spirit of brotherhood before they could make an acceptable offering.

In such a proclamation of the kingdom, the keynote necessarily became loyalty to the God of righteousness and to Jesus as his Son and representative. This is still the keynote of the kingdom message.

Whenever and wherever the kingdom is built, it will be built by God with the loyal co-operation of those who love him and who serve him without qualification and without regret.

When it became apparent that the Jewish people as a people were unwilling to meet the conditions of their inheritance, Jesus denounced their leaders and turned to a small nucleus of spiritually minded persons whom he made the pioneers of a new Israel. The public denunciation of the Pharisees by Jesus came to a climax in his pronouncement of seven "woes" or statements of disapproval directed against their character and conduct. This denunciation is important to us today, since it indicates those things which the Lord condemns in any society, ancient or modern. These things are (a) supposedly spiritual leadership which actually obstructs the way into the kingdom;<sup>9</sup> (b) proselyting which converts men to an institution but not to God;<sup>10</sup> (c) rationalization which obscures the truth;<sup>11</sup> (d) using obedience to part of the law as an excuse for disobeying the remainder of the law;<sup>12</sup> (e) emphasis on ceremonial cleanness as a substitute for inner rightness;<sup>13</sup> (f) hypocrisy under the guise of religion;<sup>14</sup> (g) worship of the past to distract attention from the iniquities of the present.<sup>15</sup> Because they had forgotten the word of the prophet that mercy is greater than sacrifice, the Pharisees had turned religion into a sham. They were hypocrites, play actors deceived by their own mummery, blind leaders of the blind.

When the Jews failed to respond to the invitation of the Master, he turned back once again to the age-old idea demonstrated by Enoch, of a nucleus of men who were called to work out their salvation while they were in the world but not of the world, and so to become a pattern for the rest of humanity. The church into which these willing disciples were called was not just a convenient association of men and women; it was a divine community, the body of Christ, a fellowship of men and women in intimate association on a high ethical plane. This group was called into being gradually; but by the early days of the apostolic era it was definitely launched into a corporate life in which the individuals shared spiritual and intellectual and material resources in sincere and open fellowship. The spirit of this com-

mon life and of this sharing is revealed in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>16</sup>

The saints of the apostolic age looked eagerly and confidently for the immediate return of the Lord Jesus in power and great glory. In this they were mistaken, as history has proved, and because of this mistake they neglected many things to which they should have given attention. But there was one major advantage which accrued to them from their expectation of the early return of the Master. They saw that the only life worth living was the life which could not be interrupted by any catastrophe; a life which Jesus could not fail to approve when he returned. They endeavored to live such a life, and did actually reach forward and bring into the present and make their own some of the values of the new age. Thus Paul wrote to the Corinthian saints: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."<sup>17</sup> To the Colossians he wrote that Christ "hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."<sup>18</sup> To the Philippians he wrote, reminding them that they were a colony of heaven.<sup>19</sup>

Even as late as the second century, when the expectation of the early return of Jesus had become dimmed, the kingdom standard was so significant in the lives of the saints that one of their teachers wrote:

"Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in customs. For they dwell not somewhere in cities of their own, neither do they use some different language, nor practice an extraordinary kind of life. Nor again do they possess any invention discovered by any intelligence or study of ingenious man, nor are they masters of any human dogma, as some are. But while they dwell in cities of Greeks and Barbarians, as the lot of each is cast, and follow the native customs in dress and food and the other arrangements of life, yet the constitution of their own citizenship, which they set forth, is marvellous, and confessedly contradicts expectation. They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. They marry like all other men and

they beget children; but they do not cast away their offspring. They have their meals in common, but not their wives. They find themselves in the flesh, and yet they live not after the flesh. Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in Heaven. They obey the established laws, and they surpass the laws in their own lives. They love all men, and they are persecuted by all . . . In a word what the soul is in a body, the Christians are in the world . . . The soul is enclosed in the body, and yet itself holdeth the body together; so Christians are kept in the world as in a prisonhouse, and yet they themselves hold the world together."<sup>20</sup>

The apostolic age was succeeded by a period of darkness which can be viewed and explained from many fundamentally related points of view, but which is best understood when it is recognized as a period of apostasy from the truth and beauty and regulative force of the kingdom. The church, whose nature it was to be the new Israel, perverted her heritage as ancient Israel had done, and found her satisfactions in nonkingdom lives of thought and activity. The belief in life after death, which should have been a salutary influence on life before death, came to usurp the place of life as it was; and the priests became powerful not as kingdom builders, but as guarantors of future bliss. Life was in time organized on a basis which had some religious characteristics, and the church did much to dispense charity and to promote learning, but the essential ideal of the kingdom which is rooted in worship and expressed in justice and industry and fellowship and growing understanding was lost. There were individuals of outstanding moral excellence, and philosophers who did much to lay the foundation for later reformation and restoration; but the times were out of joint; the church was in apostasy; the kingdom was not built.

It was like God to match the new modern dispensation of intellectual and mechanical advance with a new call to build the kingdom. He has done this in the Restoration Movement, calling men again to live as they were fashioned to live, as brothers and citizens in the kingdom of God. The new message is the old message of a present life responsive to the best that we know of Divinity, and yet looking forward and upward to the better life which is to come as we respond

more and more fully and more and more intelligently to the pattern conceived from the beginning of time. The new order of the kingdom does not overvalue material things. On the contrary, it bids men look not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are not seen; "for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Yet although kingdom citizens do not overvalue material things, they do draw conclusions in material terms; they do insist on translation from the general into the particular, from principles into action, from the laws of justice to just relations among all men.

So, today, the gospel of the kingdom is again being preached. This gospel is concerned with life—the fullest possible life for the finest possible men. It does not identify itself with any purely social or political program, although it is concerned with and must support any program which promotes social justice. But its own program is the divine program; and this is once again the program of the nucleus, the called out, the distinct and separate people, the people of Zion. It is a program for people who recognize that they have a dual mission—to build the kingdom and to invite men to share it. It is a program which insists that while a man ought to have his daily bread, he cannot live by bread alone. It provides that kingdom citizens shall co-operate to see that, so fully as possible, and on the basis of the opportunities of the community, the needs and just wants of every man shall be supplied; but all this is a means to an end. The end is that men shall develop their latent powers in association and under divine guidance, and so enter into a new world whose beauty we can as yet only dimly foresee. As we participate in this program and share this life, we shall yet realize the fulfillment of the vision of the prophets in the consummation of all things, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 6: 44-47; 7: 12, 13, 35; *Doctrine and Covenants* 36: 2, 3, 14; 104: 24.  
<sup>2</sup> Enoch's father (Jared) and his grandfather (Mahalaleel) are both mentioned as residents of Zion (*Doctrine and Covenants* 81: 4; 101: 8). Methuselah, Enoch's son, was born in the year the city of Zion was founded, so that he and his son Lamech were also probable residents of the city. All of these



survived the translation of the city by many years. <sup>3</sup> Genesis 12:3; Exodus 6:7; 19:6; Leviticus 26:12; Deuteronomy 30:5, 6, etc. <sup>4</sup> Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:1-5. Note also the passages which predict the kingdom without mentioning the king specifically, e. g., Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1; Daniel 2:44; 7:13, 14, 18, 27. <sup>5</sup> Mark 1:29. <sup>6</sup> See Hastings *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. <sup>7</sup> John 1:11; 6:22, 64, 65; 8:43; 10:41; Matthew 21:23-45; 23:17-39. <sup>8</sup> Matthew 10:6. <sup>9</sup> Matthew 23:13. <sup>10</sup> Matthew 23:15. <sup>11</sup> Matthew 23:16; <sup>12</sup> Matthew 23:23. <sup>13</sup> Matthew 23:25. <sup>14</sup> Matthew 23:27. <sup>15</sup> Matthew 23:29-31. <sup>16</sup> Acts 2:42, 44-47. <sup>17</sup> II Corinthians 5:17. <sup>18</sup> Colossians 1:13. <sup>19</sup> Philippians 3:20. <sup>20</sup> Epistle to Diognetus from *The Apostolic Fathers*, by Bishop Lightfoot, pages 505, 506.

## THY KINGDOM COME

### THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULLNESS OF TIMES

THIS AGE IS OUR AGE. As Bishop Koehler said in a memorable testimony, "This may not be the day to build the kingdom, but it is our day to try." And there are many indications that, at long last, victory is at hand. Most certainly this victory awaits only our faith, vision, and courage. Innumerable factors favoring our victory have been the special gifts of God to the modern age.

In his book *The New World Order*, H. G. Wells has pointed out the immense difference made in human affairs by what he describes as "the abolition of distance."<sup>1</sup> This abolition of distance has been most dramatically impressed upon our generation, even as it was being achieved, by the exigencies of the Second World War. Never before has such potent meaning been given to the prophetic phrase, "the hastening time"; for no sooner had the conquest of the air been demonstrated than the finest young men of our generation were sent hurrying through skies so fast that no place on earth is now more than a few hours distant from any other place on earth. Moreover, what is being done so dramatically in the air is being supported with equal drama in corresponding fields of life. Radio, too, has abolished distance. So has the motion picture. And television is struggling toward perfection so that it, too, may help toward the same end.

That which has been done today at the behest of the gods of war is but a prophecy of what will be done tomorrow under the banners of peace. There is now no power on earth that can prevent people from coming to know each other. No merely national barriers, no barriers of language, no sense of special privilege, can long withstand the onslaught which has already begun. This is far more important than any merely military conflict. Age-long conceptions of time and space and geography are being discarded overnight. The Atlantic, for example, is becoming one of the great lakes. We do

not even bother to fly directly across it, but go to our several destinations by air routes which simply disregard this once unpassable barrier. By the same routes the people of all lands will one day mingle together to share their industrial interests, their culture, their insight, and—as we most assuredly hope and believe—their worship of the God and Father of all.

A second factor on which Mr. Wells lays great stress in discussing the transformation now going on is the new and vastly larger scale on which we are operating. The very fact of the abolition of distance has made necessary and possible large scale organization in every field of life: industry, agriculture, transportation, medicine, recreation, the concentration of population, and the like.

For a time this sudden endowment of new power overwhelmed us, and we tended to think of men as mere units in the economic scheme. There is a sense in which this was to be expected, for in the absence of any clear picture of the kingdom, we naturally think of ourselves in relation to the emphases current in our day. It has always been so. Back in the middle ages, when the church was dominant throughout Christendom by reason of her alleged power to bind and loose through all the ages of futurity, man was regarded as a pilgrim who had no abiding place here, but whose home was heaven. That was the age of "spiritual man." With the coming of the Reformation with its emphasis on private judgment, and of the Renaissance with its emphasis on new learning, and of science with its emphasis on experiment and knowledge, man came to be regarded as primarily intellectual. That was the age of the "intellectual man." Later still, when France and England and America and lesser countries were struggling toward a more equitable adjustment of the relations of men and of nations, politics seemed all important. That was the age of "political man." And then, with the coming of the Industrial Revolution with its aggressive emphasis on the rewards of industry, we entered into the economic era and the age of "economic man."<sup>2</sup>

There has been some truth behind each of these concepts of the nature of man, but also a great deal of error. Each concept in turn has enlarged the horizons of our understanding; but each time, when

we recovered from the heady intoxication of the new experience and its corresponding emphasis, we have seen and felt that we were made for a far grander destiny than any of these ideas portrayed. Man is not "intellectual" or "political" or "economic" or even "spiritual" to the exclusion of the other aspects of his nature; but he is the son of God, and is entitled to live in constant communion with Divinity and in companionship with his fellow man. Only this can satisfy the deepest needs of his nature.

It is no accident that the era of industrial progress which we have known has also been an era of increasing scepticism and disorganization and doubt. Our greatest need today, a need over-riding every other need, and felt by leaders as well as by average men, is the need for a true sense of direction and for power to take that direction. Religion will never again be potent until large numbers of men come to believe that God has a plan for free men; and the world will never be secure for any of us until religion takes its rightful place.

Despite the fervid patriotism engendered by the war, it is fashionable today to speak disparagingly of national sovereignty. There is ample justification for this, for nationalism as an end in itself is a wicked and destructive thing. But nationalism does not need to be wicked and destructive. It is the spirit of selfishness and of exclusiveness which makes nationalism vicious, and it is the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of the kingdom, which can make nationalism glorious. As a young man joys in his maturing strength, so should a nation find happiness in growing powers exerted in the right direction. The distinctive contributions of the several peoples of the world ought to make possible in time the era of the "cosmopolitan man," who should also be God's man and every other man's friend.

As we push toward this desirable consummation, we find ourselves marching in strange company. All sorts of people are looking for the coming of a new era. There are men who are afraid that no single nation can stand by itself, and who therefore seek alliances which will give them security. Then there are industrialists who have vision enough to see that the development of a world point of view probably means the development of world markets. And there

are social idealists who wish to share the highest blessings of civilization with all men everywhere, regardless of their lack of preparation for the responsibilities which must go hand in hand with new opportunities. Then, too, there are those who would cut loose from all that history has taught us, and who would build the new age of the "cosmopolitan man" without any especial endeavor to make this man a man of God, and therefore one who can be trusted with power. All of these, and others too, seem at times to be talking the language of the kingdom; but even though some should occasionally use phrases that sound strangely familiar, the letter without the spirit is dead.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the world order which is dying around us cannot be saved by any mere readjustment of its mechanics and techniques. What is needed is not a new constitution, nor a new set of international agreements, nor a new center of earthly authority and sovereignty, but a new spirit—a new pride in men coupled with a new humility born of our inescapable dependence upon God. We cannot gain this spirit by ourselves; but we can respond to it. It is the only spirit by which the devils of this modern age can be cast out—those devils of pride and aggressiveness and injustice and cruelty and fear and hatred.

If we are ever to reshape the world society, we have two possible courses: one is to seek the steady improvement of things as they are, and the other is to build Zion and let her influence radiate from the center place in harmony with the promises of God. The prophets and the historians join in urging us toward the second of these alternatives as the peculiar contribution of the people of God, even though we must neglect no opportunity to make a more generalized contribution.

If we are to build Zion as a center of beauty and power and enlightenment, those who participate must learn all that they can from the successes and failures of the past; yet they must be quickened by a spirit which shall stimulate gifts appropriate to the building of the kingdom in this age. Precisely what those gifts will be we cannot fully understand ourselves; but it is already apparent that the gifts of faith and of wisdom and of prophecy and of healing and of discern-

ment will be of major importance. Other gifts must necessarily be added to these, such as the gift of reconciliation, by which a man blessed with something warmer than the gift of administration will be enabled to fuse otherwise discordant elements into a harmonious and satisfying whole. The early Christian church enjoyed such gifts; and there is every reason to expect that these gifts will be forthcoming in a day when we are passionately concerned about kingdom affairs.

Looking backward, we shall be tempted to scale down our expectations to the point where our conservatism may destroy our hope, but there is no inherent reason why the way forward need be long, even though it will evidently be arduous. The idea of evolution explains life only when God is the determining force; and the evidence is clear that when conditions are ripe a leap forward is made—indeed, conditions appear to be ripened for the leap. The emergence of man from among the lesser animals is not explained by those animals, but by God who called him forth and made him different. So also, the emergence of Jesus from his Jewish background is in no way explained by that background, but by the specific act of Divinity. Jesus was a new type of man, the "second Adam," the living example of what man was created to be. The more we know about the spiritual possibilities of our own lives, through our contacts with Divinity, the more readily we can believe that the kingdom can come much more quickly than would be possible otherwise, if only we will offer eager co-operation. In human history we have many examples of rapid adjustments to a higher type of living: the rise of Athens, the spread of Christianity, the revival of learning, and the recent rebirth of the Far East, all testify to this possibility.

Strange as it may appear, these forward steps of humanity are almost invariably accompanied by catastrophe; so that present tribulation and demoralization in some areas of life form an appropriate framework for such advance as we may achieve. It seems to be a rule of life that the greater the light, the more strongly marked is the darkness. "As in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all

away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."<sup>3</sup> So also, in an hour when the tools fashioned for the building of the kingdom are being used for the destruction of our finest material treasures, we may nevertheless be standing in the very gateway into the kingdom.

The man of faith lives by his abiding conviction that what ought to be can be, for God is its guarantor. The finest hopes of the finest men center in the kingdom of God. It is near to the heart of God himself. Surely this ought to be. And it will be; for to deny this is to deny all that we have hoped and worked for; it is to take all meaning out of the upward struggle of humanity through the ages; it is to bring us to the gates of the temple and then to condemn us to remain forever outside, beggars who have fallen short of what should have been. God has provided for us some better things than this. He is himself the ground of our hope for a finer way of life, life lived in view of eternity and so redeemed from pettiness and from guilt, yet life lived here, on this earth, by men who accept gladly the costs which are entailed in so joyous a way of living.

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<sup>1</sup> *The New World Order*, by H. G. Wells, page 30. <sup>2</sup> Discussed by Bishop of Chichester in *Christianity and World Order*, Penguin Edition, page 18.  
<sup>3</sup> Matthew 24: 38, 39.











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